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**ADVERTISER SIGNALS AS INDICATORS
OF ADVERTISER FITNESS**

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**ADVERTISING SIGNALS AS INDICATORS
OF ADVERTISER FITNESS**

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ADVERTISING SIGNALS AS INDICATORS OF ADVERTISER FITNESS

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A new perspective on consumer behavior is proposed using theoretical predictions developed from behavioral ecology, economics, and evolutionary psychology. These predictions pose the possibility that consumers often make choices based on mental processing heuristics evolved long before the extensive human development of the cerebral cortex, and are therefore automatic, interrelated, and non-conscious. The literature review develops theoretical platforms that suggest consumer choice may be based on signal qualities that are expected to be honest indicators of the quality of the signaler and synthesized into

the concept of ‘Advertiser Fitness.’ The construct of Advertiser Fitness is conceived as integrated perceptions of advertiser creativity (signal style) and perceptions of perceived quality of ad production (signal quality), and is statistically validated across two product categories, cell phone services and auto insurance. In addition, Advertiser Fitness is shown to have statistically significant positive associations with traditional measures of advertising effectiveness, including Attitude Toward the Ad, Attitude Toward the Brand, and Purchase Intent. The interrelated constructs of Perceived Honesty, Perceived Advertiser Status, Self-Relevance, and Potential Word of Mouth are also shown to have statistically significant positive correlations with the Advertiser Fitness construct and with the traditional measures of advertising effectiveness: Attitude Toward the Ad, Attitude Toward the Brand, and Purchase Intent. These constructs appear to be inter-related and redundant rather than having causal, linear relationships. The results suggest that observable creative dimensions of advertiser signals convey signaler (advertiser) quality. Similarly, impressions of signaler (advertiser) status are important inputs for the formation of positive consumer perceptions and are associated with measures of potential action including purchase intention and predicted word-of-mouth. This work opens a new window into understanding consumer behavior by introducing contemporary observation to evolutionary sources of motivation for behavior, and views consumer markets as dynamic ecosystems which can potentially be illuminated by better understanding and application of phenomena in natural ecosystems for consumer behavior.

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INTRODUCTION

For most of the history of mankind, everything in the physical world has been linked to the mysteries of a cosmic power: a God or gods who caused the earth to come into being, created life in all its forms, and determined the fate of every living thing. Every civilization has had some variation on this theme, and even now, it pervades the lives and belief systems of people all over Planet Earth. Not until the Age of Enlightenment in Western Europe beginning in the 18th century (also known as the Age of Reason) did philosophers start to grapple with the idea that divine intervention and natural phenomena may not be associated. The separation of God and physics, biology, and economics was a difficult idea, one that was inconceivable to Sir Isaac Newton, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and even Thomas Jefferson (Shabas 2005).

For most natural philosophers, the conflation of natural events, whether ordained by God or Nature herself, with the will of a natural authority was a given not worthy of debate. Even David Hume, known as the most agnostic of early economists, made occasional reference to the authority of a natural power,

as in his *Essays*, says Nature has a plan to “make us sensible of her authority” (Hume 1777/1985, p 163).

During the Enlightenment, the moral and natural worlds were unified in having been designed by a deity who had made the world according to a given plan. Natural philosophers held beliefs in the omnipresent intervention and providence of the Christian God who ruled natural order and created man in the image and likeness of God, thereby separating man from the rest of the animal kingdom and its beastly urges. Today, economic theory is nominally detached from the physical world, and is ruled by human reason and agency, that unique quality conferred only upon Man.

In 1859, Charles R. Darwin published *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (Darwin 1859) setting the world on its proverbial ear by suggesting we might be more closely related to apes and lower primates than God, whose DNA cannot, after all, be tested. Darwin followed up with *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* in 1871 (Darwin 1871). In these two books, Darwin describes the processes by which genetic material is passed differentially from one generation to the next, with the result that populations of animals shift in their overall genetic frequencies over time.

Up until Darwin’s *Origin* and persisting until the end of the 19th century, was a strong conflation of the concept of physical science and God’s ordained

order of the cosmos (Schabas 2005). With Darwin, a philosophical shift began that has driven a deep wedge between the foundations of natural sciences (biology, ecology, psychology, e.g.) rooted in the primordial ooze and primitive logic that gives rise to passion, and sciences dealing with economic phenomena (economics, marketing and advertising) which pursue hygienic means to understanding market phenomena untainted by the unwashed hordes. Economic theory has not embraced evolutionary content since Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899).

The essence of the theoretical development in this work is that sexual selection in nature engenders a "skilled salesmanship among the males and an equally well-developed sales resistance and discrimination among the females" (Williams 1966, p. 184). Similarly, the 'genetic' interest of the advertiser is to secure as many transactions as possible, thereby increasing the rate of company growth for the profit of the owners or stockholders. The 'genetic' interest of the consumer is to passively resist all but the most excellent advertisers' products or services in order to optimize her resources for the quality of her life and reproductive success. The advertiser's involvement may end with the transaction. The consumer, on the other hand, has more to lose from making a poor choice.

This research will follow the logical path suggested by Darwin and Veblen, tracing trails through economic signaling, behavioral ecology, evolutionary psychology, personality and animism, fitness indicators and finally back to advertising as a signal of advertiser fitness, and the role creativity plays in the analysis. The circuitousness of the path is necessary to reframe the function and outcome of advertising from a framework of cognitive evaluation of rational signals to one of automatic assessment of potential bluffs using the same strategies that are used by birds, beasts, and bees. Under this new framework, the questions asked are not, “Do you like the ad?” and “do you like the brand?”—but rather, “is it creative or not?; “is it a quality production or not?”; and “do you think it cost a lot?”

Ultimately, this research is based on the idea that humans react to signals using the same evaluative processes and heuristics that evolved during prehistoric time when there were no mass media, no iPods, no MTV, no blockbuster movies, no billboards, and no shopping malls. Signals continue to appeal to unconscious, automatic evaluators that have evolved across millennia devoid of broadcast media. These signals eliciting unconscious processing are the stuff of Petty and Cacioppo’s (Petty and Cacioppo 1986) ‘peripheral’ route to persuasion, a route conceived to contain all the things that might not fit into the ‘central’ route to

persuasion – an intellectual catch-all category, a grab-bag, a black box – in which processing ‘simply happens’ (Larson 2004, p 94).

This work proceeds from a perspective that these types of evolved messages have enjoyed the refinements of millennia of biofeedback and reproductive propagation, and that we can glean many insights for application in the relatively nascent world of advertising media. In order to make use of natural systems of advertising it is necessary to explore the range and outcome of natural advertising systems. Therefore, what follows is a discussion of some of the dimensions of natural signaling or advertising that form the foundation of the constructs developed for this study.

Some of the evolved message types are, for instance, signals relating to survival, status, or sex – all of which are key to life and reproduction and are therefore of paramount interest to virtually all organisms. To clarify, survival messages are those messages that increase the likelihood of survival: predator alarms, fire alarms, and instructive messages such as the animal equivalent of ‘don’t jump out of the nest until you can fly’ and ‘tigers eat you.’ It is necessary to survive in order to reproduce, after all.

Status messages are communications that inform individuals of status hierarchies and where they fall in that hierarchy, information that can have consequences to the biological fitness of the individual and survivability of

offspring (e.g., Dunbar 2003). Sometimes status messages have to do with how to increase one's own status or decrease another individual's status. Status messages include information about food allocation based on status, sex information based on status, and social hierarchy information. Status messages include competitive information, such as whether Gorilla A or Gorilla B is more powerful or how the chickens in the farmyard stack up in their pecking order, which monkey you need to groom to get better dibs on dinner, or which monkeys are likely to line up to groom you. In humans, status messages include the kind of car one drives, the neighborhood one lives in, the label on the designer dress, and the size of the donation to the UnitedWay fund drive. Status, then, overlaps with the two fundamental units of selection: natural (based on survivability) and sexual (usually based on female preferences for male traits).

Sex messages are those that signal sexual availability, location, consent, courtship displays, secondary sexual characteristic displays, and sexual behavior itself. Sex messages include mating calls of whales, birds, frogs, and college students; physical displays that indicate fertility such as swollen sex glands in ferrets; colorful rump patches in baboons, and lots of skin with enhanced cleavage in college girls. Courtship dances are sexual signals in sage grouse, roadrunners, and again, college students.

The ardent male anhinga, a large, primitive bird that inhabits the Florida Everglades, presents his intended with a stick which she may use to construct a nest in which to lay her fertilized eggs. If she accepts it, they mate. A similar scene is acted out between roadrunners during mating season: the enamored male catches and tenderizes a juicy lizard, a prize that will nourish her soon-to-develop eggs, and presents it to the female object of his affection. If she accepts his offering, he proceeds with mating while she eats the lizard. This is not so different from the presentation of a diamond engagement ring to a young woman as a signal of intention to mate. In humans, sex messages include advertisements that appeal to increasing personal attractiveness in order to better compete for sexual opportunities, such as deodorant ads, shampoo ads, mouthwash and toothpaste ads, and other ads promoting improved personal presentation, from hairstyles to clothes, to accessories, to cars, and so on.

Darwin's great insight was that a lot of the things the females liked in courtship displays were costing the males in terms of energy or resources. The females were choosing the behaviors and attributes they preferred, but the males were stepping up to give it to them despite the cost, because the willingness to comply was a condition of mating at all. The males who did not comply simply did not reproduce, so the 'sandbag' gene did not spread through the population. Darwin finally published his observations and called the phenomenon sexual

selection. Further investigation of sexual selection suggests that fitness indications such as conspicuous cost (Zahavi 1975) and innovative displays of extraordinary but useful behavior (Miller 2000) become important when physical traits are less telling, as is the case with humans.

It is most unlikely that the female anhinga or the female roadrunner processes the relative merits of the presented gift according to a cognitive model. They are, after all, birds—and it follows that they have bird brains. There is no prefrontal cortex assigned to executive function, the ‘rational’ aspect of cognition associated with the divine nature of man’s creation. And yet, they are able to make viable choices that have enhanced their survivability for a much longer period of time than humans, so far. The system they use is not broken.

Natural advertising as we understand it, then, proceeds from evolved mechanisms for choosing appropriate behaviors to enhance life and reproduction, and humans process signals with respect to how they may enhance or detract from their own situations, weighing the relevance and cost of each signal at a subconscious level before bringing cognition to bear on the question. Evolved evaluation heuristics can be hypothesized to automatically frame dimensions of economic and ecological consideration, from birth to death and taxes, and the manner of conveyance which bears the individual along.

The automatic nature of processing advertising messages is to pay attention to opportunities to promote life by accurately interpreting advertisers' signals. The automatic nature of impressing signal receivers is to display with credibly exclusive signals that communicate the best possible genetic contribution to the survival of the partnership. Favorable impressions can be fostered either through credibly *high-cost* signaling and credibly *innovative* signaling, both of which are associated with higher genetic fitness, which confers *status* in the natural world. The more favorable impressions lead to higher status, which leads to greater reproductive or market strength, which is in turn maintained at a cost of increased quality of signaling.

This research will examine how present-day consumers perceive advertisers based on the predictions of evolutionary psychology and behavioral ecology by looking at perceived cost of production and perceived creativity as a combined indicator of Advertiser Fitness. It will also look at the predicted filters predicted to make signals important to individuals: perceived honesty, self-relevance, and perceived status of the signaler. In addition, these constructs will be compared to traditional measures of advertising effectiveness to gauge their usefulness in research and practice.

CHAPTER 1

READING ADVERTISING AS A NATURAL PHENOMENON

1.01 REFRAMING ADVERTISING

Typically, advertising research follows theoretical constructs such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein 1975) or Agenda Setting (McCombs & Shaw 1972). The Theory of Reasoned Action holds that a person's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of social norms will converge in an intention to perform and subsequent behavior. Agenda Setting describes the process by which mass media effectively determine what the public thinks about. While these are robust theories with extensive empirical work to support them, it is important to remember that as time marches on, media use and consumer experience are changing at unprecedented rates. Advertising research has not explored significantly beyond the borders of extant ideas in the advertising portfolio in the last thirty or so years, despite changes in the environment.

The rapidly changing human environment, fraught with ever-burgeoning forms of technological advancement, transportation styles, career choices, life

choices, and above all, media appeals for attention to the possibility of acquiring more of everything, is at the heart of the research described in this proposal. It is noteworthy that during the lifetimes of senior members of the American Academy of Advertising, the media environment has changed like an ebola virus infecting a victim. Merely 50 years prior to this writing, broadcast television was limited to three networks, the nature of advertising was simpler, and the volume of advertisements consumers were exposed to on a daily basis was a mere fraction of what it is today. Theories of persuasion developed in the wake of World War II when most people did not even have a television continue to inform advertising research in spite of the changes to the environment.

What was created when television colonized the households of western civilization remains to be illuminated, but the ways that human minds process communication signals has not changed significantly in the space of two generations. Evolution does not work that fast. The fossil record places the evolution of modern man (*Homo sapiens*) between 300,000 and 400,000 years ago, during the Paleolithic Age, with specimens known from Europe and Africa. The climate since then has varied through a couple of Ice Ages and evidence articulated most famously by Al Gore in his award-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth* (Lawrence Bender Productions & Guggenheim 2006), about the threshold changes in global climates as a result of poor stewardship of natural

resources, suggest it is going to change again. Early humans dispersed throughout the African-European-Asian continents, evolved into distinct races and cultures, and adapted to life in extremely different habitats using the tools they were able to make and surviving off the land they happened to occupy by hunting game and gathering wild plants for food and clothing. Survival from day to day was risky in ways that present day humans do not worry about: small cuts and tooth decay could be lethal, neighboring hostile tribes could carry off individuals for human sacrifice, or one could be accidentally trampled by a wooly mammoth, gored by an Irish elk, or eaten by a bear.

The experience of early humans was that hostile tribes had potentially lethal motivations that wooly mammoths were unpredictable and potentially lethal, and that bears and tigers ate smaller animals including humans. Knowing these tendencies was important information that helped people make decisions about how to act. They also knew that men wanted to have sex and women had to be as discriminating as possible about how they participated because the consequences were more significant for the women than for the men. Interpreting the motives behind human or animal behavior accurately was an important survival skill.

Modern, western culture humans usually live in urban environments, buy their food at the grocery store, and get where they need to go in cars they don't

know how to fix. Computers, iPods, microwave ovens, order-out pizza, and HD-TV are integral to daily existence. Most people would not survive very long if by some twist of fate they suddenly found themselves transported back to the Paleolithic Age. The essential survival skills of finding water, tending a fire, defending a safe spot from bears and saber-tooth tigers, and surviving a winter in the absence of a local grocer are not part of contemporary western cultural experience.

Nevertheless, it is still of great importance to accurately interpret the motives of others with whom people interact: to accurately gauge whether the strange person on the sidewalk is a psychotic killer or a hapless homeless person, whether the parish priest is benign or a child molester, whether a colleague at work is a cooperative member of the team or a spy for another interest, and whether a current beau has honorable or despicable intentions, for instance. Extending the issue to advertising, it would be important to accurately discern, for instance, what a person promoting an idea or product will gain from product adoption, and whether the advantages or benefits foretold are reliable. In short, the ability to gauge credibility continues to be an important feature of the human mind, as it ever has been.

The brains humans have brought to contemporary existence are the same brains that evolved to survive the Paleolithic Age. Evolution proceeds over

geological time at a rate that is exceedingly slow, while the rate of human cultural change is accelerating faster and faster. Humans are facing the future with brains that evolved in the past.

Those brains may be conditioned or adapted to present problems, but on a primitive level they still function as natural selection has endowed them over geological time, to process important signals automatically, without 'thinking.' The automatic nature of impressing signal receivers is to display with credibly exclusive signals that communicate the best possible genetic contribution to survival. Favorable impressions that confer or maintain status can be fostered either through credibly high-cost signaling and credibly innovative signaling.

In order for the human species to survive as a successful species, questions of fairness and gender equitability were not debated with regard to equality. Indeed, from an evolutionary point of view, gender differences were, and still are, most definitely unequal. Understanding the inequalities that led to the very different ways that males and females discriminate between possible mate choices leads to reconsideration of how humans make choices using behavioral ecology and evolutionary psychology as a guide, and through extension, what can be gleaned to illuminate the field of consumer advertising.

1.02 THEORIES OF CHOOSING

Consumer research has been influenced by theories of choosing (also known as theories of persuasion) that generally provide no explicit role for choosers' knowledge of persuasion (Anderson 1981; Chaiken 1987; Fishbein & Ajzen 1981; Greenwald 1968; Hovland et al 1953; Kisielius & Sternthal 1984; McGuire 1969; Petty & Cacioppo 1986). A robust literature has developed explicating choice heuristics without speculating on evolutionary strategies (e.g., Hoyer 1984, Tetlock 2002). Partial insight into consumers' capacities to interpret advertisers' and salespeople's behaviors has been offered by Attribution Theory (e.g., Eagly et al 1981; Folkes 1988; Settle & Golden 1974; Smith & Hunt 1978; Sparkman & Locander 1980). Although audience characteristics have been studied as moderators of persuasion effects, audience understanding of persuasion techniques has not been included in this research stream. Research on specific message tactics such as fear arousal does not generally question audience understanding of the tactic as manipulation (Friestad & Wright 1994). Studies such as those exploring consumer attitudes toward advertising do not probe audience beliefs about the psychology of advertising (Bartos & Dunn 1976; Dyer & Shimp 1980; Moore & Moschis 1978; Reid & Soley 1982). All of these models of persuasion tend to treat the message as an *a priori* entity rather than a

manipulation by a participant in the environment who may have motives inconsistent with the audience.

An evolutionary psychology approach would suggest that the advertiser is inseparable from the message in that the motive of the advertiser is fundamental to the interpretation of the message (Miller 2000). While most people are probably aware most of the time when they are being asked to buy something, more and more advertising strategies are turning to 'under-the-radar' tactics like product placement and infotainment, where the product being sold and the entertaining content of an offering are merged into a single message.

In the ancestral environment, women knew what motivated men, and everybody knew what motivated bears. In today's world, it is a simple operation to assume that advertisers are motivated to sell things, but not all advertisers are created equal, just as in the primitive environment, not all men offered equal benefits to choosing women. Human abilities to discriminate motives and benefits, then, had to evolve reliability, and those are the same mechanisms that persist today in contemporary humans making choices about consumer goods. Using this logic, advertisers today engage in competitive mating rituals with target consumers, attracting, courting, and engaging in marriage-like transactions to propagate their brands in the marketplace.

Why the dearth of investigation linking evolved signaler motives and evolved message design? Perhaps it is because an evolutionary approach struck the founders of economic theory as anathematic, that it was heretical and inconsistent with the accepted truth of man's creation in the likeness of an omniscient god, and the possibility of a fate similar to Bernard Spinoza's if the canon of truth were challenged. Perhaps determining motive is a more nefarious proposition than weighing the text of a message. Perhaps early researchers deemed audiences too simple to think beyond the *prima facie* message, a situation suggested by early persuasion research studies such as those conducted by Hovland during World War II on one-sided vs. two-sided messages (Hovland Janis & Kelly 1953). In any case, the omission begs attention—and the evolutionary approach begins by taking evolutionary antecedents into consideration.

1.03 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ANIMALS AND HUMANS

Recent neuroscience research suggests that the mental processes that support locomotion, hunting, evasive action, exploring, sensing, actively attending, learning, eating, grazing, nursing, mating, social interaction, and all other goal-directed survival and reproduction actions that take place in animals

and humans are homologous processes (Baars 2005). In other words, all of those activities get processed the same way in the brains of all the creatures who engage in them. The same areas of the brain do the same things using the same neural network pathways in animals and in humans. Humans have more cerebral cortex, a feature that makes possible the *New York Times* Crossword Puzzle, for instance, but in other respects, humans and animals think alike.

What's interesting is that the things that make animals uncomfortable, distressed, or anxious in their daily environments are frequently things used by humans, especially human advertisers, to attract the attention of potential customers. For instance, cattle are stressed by things like sudden movements, high contrast areas, bright reflections, presence of unusual characters, jiggling, clinking, metallic noises, hissing, waving things, moving stuff, novel things they have not seen before, intermittent sounds, changes in texture, changes in color—anything that represents a novelty (Grandin & Johnson 2005). All these categories of things alarm or distress cattle, often causing worry and usually causing investigation – all of which is bad if the cattle are about to be slaughtered because distressed cattle make poor quality beef. Grandin & Johnson (2005) assert that this attunement to the environment generates an automatic orienting response in curious people and avoidant cows – caused by things like plastic multicolored flags or twirly things on used car lots. An orienting response is

activated by an unexpected event and always causes an animal to stop whatever they're doing and orient to the sound or motion. It demands a conscious decision about what to do, whether the animal involved is a cow or a human, whether the decision is to eat it, investigate, run away, mate with it, or ignore it (Grandin & Johnson 2005).

The strategies human advertisers use to get attention frequently employ the very same conditions that make cows nervous. That advertising uses these same strategies suggests that human adaptations for noticing are similar to animal adaptations for noticing – and arguments for conscious processing in animals are rare as hens' teeth. Humans notice things the way animals do because humans are animals.

1.04 CONCEPTS OF NATURAL AND SEXUAL SELECTION

Charles Darwin first proposed the concept of sexual selection in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), distinguishing between sexual selection, which proceeds on preferences for some individuals over others of the same sex. Natural selection, alternatively, proceeds on the survival of both sexes (Darwin 1871). The difference between the two processes is key to

understanding aspects of animal and human nature that defy logic, and has everything to do with how people read advertising.

In natural selection, adaptive innovations such as callus-producing mechanisms on the soles of the human foot gave our ancestors a beneficial predisposition to improved survival and hence, to reproduce more than those without the beneficial predisposition (Stern 1959). As arcane as that sounds, it makes sense. People with tougher feet were better at running away from threatening things and better at running toward food. People with tender feet were more likely to suffer, have poorer locomotion skills, and therefore lower status in the community, resulting in lower reproductive potential. Other adaptive innovations might be fear of snakes which would make people avoid snake proximity and lower the chance of toxic snakebites or tool-making skills such as flint-knapping to improve the quality of weapons for self-defense or for hunting game. Each adaptive innovation, whether callus-producing mechanisms, fear of snakes, arrowhead-making skills, the practice of agriculture, etc., led to greater survivability and therefore, greater reproductive success.

The theory of natural selection holds that the minds of the evolved are designed to maximize reproductive potential *in the environment in which those minds evolved*, also known as the “ancestral environment” (Wright 1994). While there is no doubt that the ancestral environment changed a good deal over time,

the closest contemporary examples of such places can be found in modern hunter-gather societies, such as the !Kung San of the Kalahari Desert in Africa, the Inuit of the Arctic Region, or the Ache of Paraguay (Wright 1994). These societies are quite different from each other, but there are recurring themes that suggest some features probably remained relatively constant for much of the evolution of the human mind. Those features include the tribal nature of human societies, where people grew up in an environment where everyone knew everyone else and strangers didn't appear frequently; mates were chosen either monogamously or polygamously and females were typically married by the onset of puberty (Wright 1996).

In all of these ancestral environments, even though the particulars of the topography, climate, and food resources are different, people are faced with similar challenges for survival on a daily basis. They must feed, clothe, and shelter themselves, avoid enemies and predators, and protect their children. Arguments could be made that we are all doing that – that these are the common denominators of human existence. These are the functions for which the human brain is primarily programmed.

Sexual selection, on the other hand, accounts for the evolution of traits that seemingly confer no benefit to their bearers, such as the peacock's tail (e.g., Zahavi 1975, Trivers 1972). The idea of sexual selection is that in deciding

which potential partner to choose over all others in mating, females (generally) must discriminate between various contenders for their favors. Female investment in reproduction is almost always significantly greater than male investment, with females providing all the energy investment in growing babies and often, all the energy investment in protecting and feeding them until they can take care of themselves. Male animals frequently contribute no more than sperm, and the energy it takes to persuade the lucky lady to copulate. Since copulation generally results in reproduction, the concept of recreational copulation is not something generally encountered in the animal kingdom. As soon as the act of copulation is completed, male animals can pursue other reproductive opportunities in a matter of minutes. The female is stuck for the duration of reproduction. She gestates, produces eggs or live young, feeds them and protects them—all requiring resources and time, and limiting her reproductive potential. It is clear that females have a lot more to lose by choosing poorly than do males.

To make the best choice, a female would have to accurately discern which male has the genetic package that, combined with her own genes, will produce the most successful offspring. The ways this problem have been solved in animal species over the millennia have included such advertisements as good singing, good dancing, good feathers or other ornamentation, good wrestling or jousting, good food gifts, and good architecture, to name a few.

The parallel between animal courtship and advertiser appeals for consumer goods is obvious. Once a brand stocks inventory, the amount of time required to complete a transaction is minimal for the advertiser, but the consumer who buys the product or service is committed to a longer investment of using, maintaining, and otherwise tending the offspring of the transaction. Understanding some of the aspects of animal courtship can provide insights into consumer advertising strategies for both the advertiser and the consumer.

Feather ornamentation is a common display solution for bird species, where bright colors ornament macaws and lyre birds which live in thick jungle environments, allowing females better visual cues to male presence. Wrestling and jousting skills are displayed in a variety of social animals, such as seals, deer, and apes who compete for group dominance (status) through demonstrations of physical strength. Males who best the competition achieve the highest status and thus win the majority of copulations in the population. Male roadrunners make gifts of fresh lizard kills to their conquests, tenderly presenting their offerings until the female in question signals her acceptance of his proposition by accepting the fresh meat (which he often keeps a hold on until the transaction is completed, and some males have been observed trying to renege).

Perhaps the most elaborate display of all is that created by the male bowerbird, who designs and builds complex architectural constructions out of

sticks, known as bowers, often comprising several rooms. He will pay particular attention to decoration, and festoon his 'lovenest' with bits of color (most often, blue), flowers, wrappers, even ball point pens, for a creative effect. The female bowerbird is an art appreciator, and signals her approval by entering the bower for copulation. She will depart the bower and build her own nest, incubating the resulting eggs with no assistance from the male (Coleman 2004).

Sage grouse are a type of bird, also known as Prairie Chickens, who attract mates through a big social event called a *lek*. A lek is sort of like a Burning Man event, or Woodstock – it is a huge congregation of creatures in a field in the middle of the wilderness, for the purpose of mating. Male sage grouse congregate first, attracting females who come to watch them compete in elaborate dances. The best dancers get to copulate with the most females.

Lekking behavior is seen in a variety of bird species as well as some mammals (Uganda kob), fish, and insects (Tomkins 2004). Some people might see similarities between leks and rock concerts, American Idol competitions, and other human congregations. More than one rock star has admitted that he got into a band because he found it easier to have sex with women who were attracted to the rock star persona. Leks.

So, the genetic interest of the male is to mate with as many females as possible, thereby increasing the rate of passing his genes to the next generation.

Advertisers seek to attract as many consumers to their brand as possible, thereby increasing the rate of brand adoption growth in the market.

The genetic interest of the female is to passively resist all but the most excellent male. Similarly, the interest of the consumer is to passively (sometimes actively) resist all but the most optimum brand value.

If this is considered in terms of the economic “sacrifice” each gender must make in order to reproduce, it is clear that for the male, the necessary sacrifice is essentially zero. His contribution may end with copulation. The female, on the other hand, has much more to lose from making a poor choice. Her sacrifice includes a commitment to a prolonged reproduction cost in both mechanical and physiological senses, an investment of resources, a need for increased securing of resources, and all the attendant stresses and dangers that go with such an investment (Williams 1966). Courtship, then, since before humans, before primates, before mammals, and going back to an original arrangement of sexual reproduction in which females produce limited numbers of eggs and require a time and resource investment in reproduction as compared to a minimal investment on the part of males, comprises advertisement by the male of his genetic fitness/attractiveness.

1.05 APPLICATION-DRIVEN ‘SEXUAL’ SELECTION IN CONSUMPTION

Taking this concept into an application-driven theoretical construct (Cooper & McAllister 1999) that attains relevance through concrete application of these ideas generates greater clarity. Sexual selection in nature engenders a “skilled salesmanship among the males and an equally well-developed sales resistance and discrimination among the females” (Williams 1966, p. 184). Similarly, the ‘genetic’ interest of the advertiser is to secure as many transactions as possible, thereby increasing the rate of company growth for the profit of the owners or stockholders. The ‘genetic’ interest of the consumer is to passively resist all but the most excellent advertisers’ products or services in order to optimize her resources for the quality of her life and reproductive success. The advertiser’s involvement may end with the transaction. The consumer, on the other hand, has more to lose from making a poor choice. It looks the same in terms of the transaction. Only the currency is different, really.

For human females, mate selection criteria should be considered in terms of the ancestral environment rather than the environment we live in today. The ancestral environment did not include large cities, commuter trains, suburbs, designer clothes, or reality TV. The disjunction between the context of contemporary life and the environment in which the human mind evolved is probably responsible for much of human psychopathology and suffering, not to

mention the disparity between circumstances and unconscious motivation—a topic central to Freud’s (1930) *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Wright 1994).

Pursuing the energy resource as currency train of thought, the resource investment conferred by the parent on the child, conceived as “parental sacrifice” by Williams (1966) was later replaced by Robert Trivers’ (1972) full blown theory of “parental investment,” forever linking reproductive strategies to an economic framework (Trivers 1972). He defined parental investment as “any investment by the parent in an individual offspring that increases the offspring’s chance of surviving at the cost of the parent’s ability to invest in other offspring” (Trivers 1972, p 139). Trivers thereby quantified the imbalance of investment between mother and father in animals, explaining the difference in eagerness between the hot male and the passive female, and illuminating subtle aspects of courtship, parental investment, fidelity, and infidelity.

Parental investment can be thought of in terms of any relationship in which the resource-rich individual commits to developing the resources of a resource-poor individual. In cases where developing the resources of the lesser-endowed individual creates a demand for the resources of the former, parallels emerge between customer development strategies and parental investments which may be useful in further studies of consumer advertising.

Another area that presents interesting potential for application to consumer behavior is the work evolving in evolutionary psychology regarding mating strategies. Forming strategic alliances for partnership and mating can be viewed through the three contexts most commonly formed with non-kin. *Coalitions* are groups of individuals formed to achieve a common goal. *Friendships* are dyadic reciprocal alliances, and *mateships* are long-term sexual alliances, usually viewed as having a reproductive function. Buss & Dekay (1996) examined the most desirable characteristics for each type of alliance and found prominent markers for personality traits in each. For coalitions the most desirable personality traits included ambitious, bold, self-confident, leadership, kindness, hardworking, dependable, emotionally stable, intelligent, open-minded, and having a wide range of knowledge. For mateships, the most desirable characteristics included self-confidence, ambition for career goals, kindness, dependable and hardworking, emotional stability, intelligence, open-mindedness, and creativity, with a wide range of knowledge. For friendships, the most desirable characteristics included boldness, self-confidence, ambition about career goals, kindness, hardworking and dependable, emotionally stable, open-mindedness, intelligence and creativity, with a wide range of knowledge.

The traits deemed desirable for each of the three types of alliances are highly similar across types. Buss (1996) observes that while there are distinct

adaptive problems for each of the three types, the evidence indicates that personality traits are critical in forming strategic alliances across the board. The characteristics of coalitions, mateships, and friendships may prove to be useful in evaluating advertisers in the future.

1.06 CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION AND STATUS

As seen in the previous examples of animal mating strategies, status gained by superior display of resources is important for reproductive opportunity and success at spreading one's genes in the population. The idea that some human individuals demonstrate their status by producing costly displays was expanded by Thorstein Veblen in his classic satirical commentary on consumerism, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, first published in 1899. This work, now considered one of the great works of economics, argued that vestiges of pre-historic life informed economic life rather than the popular notion of utility, and that human social behavior is based on variations of primitive tribal organization. *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Veblen 1899) argued that in human communities, status is conferred by wasting resources through conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. Conspicuous consumption

was famously illustrated by the use of silver eating utensils when less expensive ones worked just as well, and often better. Conspicuous leisure, the wasted time people consume to give themselves higher status, would include “gentleman” activities such as studying philosophy and fine arts, and going to the opera.

Obviously, consumption is not always based on practical utility – a \$39 Casio watch will keep accurate Atomic time while a \$10,000 Rolex will not, but the Rolex confers greater status. In many circumstances, consumer purchase is not explainable by the intrinsic utility derived from consuming a good, for instance, when the good is purchased in order to advertise the wealth of the consumer and thereby achieve greater social status (Rae 1834; Veblen 1899). As described by Frank (1985a; 1985b), conspicuous consumption as a quest for social status may cause serious inefficiencies in the form of downward distortions in individual demands for nonpositional goods. That is an obscure way to say that when the unwashed hordes develop a taste for a status symbol and start to acquire it, say, for instance, Rolex watches, then the people who previously enjoyed exclusivity and high status because they were the only ones displaying such symbols have to eschew them and move on to some other status symbol still out of reach of the unwashed hordes.

Similarly, distortions may arise from the stigma effects induced by participation in welfare programs (Moffit 1983). Ireland (1994) and Bagwell and

Bernheim (1996) developed the work of Veblen and Frank into full-fledged models of conspicuous consumption as signals of wealth. Corneo and Jeanne (1997) further extend this to explain snob effects and bandwagon effects. The bandwagon effect describes a situation in which the demand for the good increases because others are purchasing the same good. Conversely, the snob effect is when market demand decreases because others are purchasing the good. Charity effects are considered by Glazer and Konrad (1996), in which products perceived as supplements to the life support of the extremely poor become *déclassé* for everyone else.

Miller (2000) links sexual selection to 20th century cultural displays of status and image. He says contemporary consumer thirsts for luxury goods and conspicuous consumption explain why men seek wealth and power more than women do, and why students become rebellious and fashion-conscious after puberty. By this logic, the status conferred on men through wealth and power gives them a sexual advantage and creates a demand for them as sexual partners by women who prefer ample resources for mating and reproduction. For individuals who are still financially dependent on parents, for whom status and wealth are less salient goals, rebelliousness and fashion-consciousness provide dimensions of distinction

1.07 ECONOMIC SIGNALING THEORY

As discussed, the perceived cost of conspicuous goods or traits signals status in human and animal populations alike. Marketing scholars have shown that the market demand for a conspicuous good may increase as more people acquire them (e.g., Gaedeke & Tootelian 1983). Typically, this phenomenon is associated with markets where the price conveys a signal about the quality of the good (Milgrom & Roberts 1986). Sometimes, the price of the good signals the quality of the *consumer* rather than that of the good (Corneo & Jeanne 1997). In some circumstances, a price increase triggers such an increase in the signaling value of the conspicuous good that its market demand grows—leading to consumption for the purpose of avoiding social ostracism rather than seeking social prestige. An example of this is the social pressure among college students to have iPods instead of equally functional but less ‘cool’ personal digital assistants.

Nelson (1974) provides evidence suggesting a signaling role for advertising. He found that experience goods had larger advertising expenditures and less reliance on word-of-mouth than did “search” goods. Nelson-style signaling models positively correlate quality, advertising and price—but subsequent systematic studies have yielded inconclusive results (e.g., Archibald et al 1983; Moorthy & Zhao 1993; Nichols 1998; Thomas et al 1998). Some

positive and significant correlations among quality, advertising and price exist in a cross section of products, or models of a product within an industry, but in many cases there seems to be no correlation among these variables at all (Horstmann & MacDonald 2003).

There are many problems with existing empirical studies. The standard signaling model only predicts a positive correlation among quality, advertising and price for newly introduced products (Kihlstrom & Riordan 1984; Milgrom & Roberts 1986), but quality and advertising are predicted to be uncorrelated for established products. Existing studies generally fail to account for consumer experience with the product. Given their focus on correlations with quality, quality must be quantified. In the signaling model, quality is information relevant to the consumer, but is often available only to the firm. Publicly available quality indices such as *Consumer Reports* or measures based on previous customer experience with similar products cannot capture the appropriate measure of quality (Horstmann & MacDonald 2003).

For many economists, the idea that price signals quality is well accepted (see, for example, Farrell 1980; Gerstner 1985; Spence 1974). Erdem et al (2005) found that price signals quality, advertising frequency signals quality but is less important than price, advertising content provides direct (but noisy) information about quality, and use experience provides direct (but noisy) information about

quality. Seeing ads nevertheless signals product information to consumers. Consumers who fail to see an ad for a product have been found to believe it will likely have low sales and so be of low value (Clark & Horstmann 2005).

Corporate stadium sponsorships have been correlated with modest increases in sponsor's stock prices at the time of announcement of the programs, suggesting that for some firms, the value of a stadium sponsorship may lie in its ability to serve as an effective signal of the quality of the company (Clark et al 2001). Similarly, announcements of NASCAR sponsorships were accompanied by the largest increases in shareholder wealth ever recorded in the marketing literature in response to a voluntary marketing program, correlated to perceived sponsorship success (Pruitt et al 2004).

Consumers expect event sponsors to have high brand equity and for the event to be congruous with the sponsor brand (Roy & Cornwell 2003). Research results suggest that consumers' attitudes toward sponsors are more favorable for sponsors with greater brand equity and event congruity than for lesser known brand sponsors.

In contrast with brand equity research in which brand associations and image were central to brand equity formation, Erdem & Swait (1998) found that brand credibility is the key element in the signaling perspective on brand equity formation and management. Their empirical study describes factors that make

brands more effective as signals of product positions than mix elements such as advertising, price point, or warranty. Those factors are rooted in consumer behavior (evaluating moral hazards against warranty effectiveness) and firm behavior (if only high-quality or truthful firms could afford to advertise, advertising could signal quality credibly (Erdem & Swait 1998). Consumer-based brand equity may be associated with the credibility of quality claims, irrespective of the quality level positioning.

Further, from the signaling perspective, Erdem and Swait (1998) suggest that brand value is created by reduced information costs and that perceived risk precedes and underlies consumer-based brand equity. This contrasts with the inverse causal links offered through a cognitive psychological framework which suggests that brand equity provides value to consumers by facilitating information processing and increasing confidence (e.g., Aaker 1991). In other words, there may be times when consumers perceive the cost of signaling as a detriment to the brand instead of perceiving cost as a signal of brand strength.

Economic signaling theory suggests that generally, the more brands advertise, the more they will be perceived as strong brands (Nelson 1974). Corporate stadium sponsorships and NASCAR sponsorships provide another kind of economic signaling that informs consumers about the strength of a brand—a brand so strong that it can afford to “waste” resources on frivolous

displays such as stadium naming and race car teams. These are signals that, from an evolutionary point of view, display superior fiscal genetics and robust budgets because they represent costly ‘handicaps’ to support, costs that could not be supported by a brand or company with weaker fiscal strengths.

1.08 SIGNAL DESIGN IN THE NATURAL WORLD

In animals, signals are ‘traits specialized for communication’ (Johnstone 1997). Signals may be as diverse as bright colors typical of birds and butterflies, mating calls of frogs or crickets, pheromones (airborne chemicals with attractive or repellent properties such as stinkbug stink) released by moths and other insects, and the territorial posturing of lizards and fishes. Signals may attract a mate, repel competitors, warn members of a group of an approaching danger, or herald the arrival of food.

Animal communication is defined as a transaction in which the cues given by one animal influence the behavior of another animal (Wiley 1983; Endler 1993). The properties and characteristics of both sender and receiver mold signal design by exerting selective pressures: the signal cannot evolve without an appropriate response from the receiving animal. Signal design is therefore

developed through a process of reciprocal selection, acting on receiver behavior and then refining signaler behavior, in an endless cycle of selection and reinforcement.

On one side of the equation, natural selection favors signalers who send signals that achieve favorable responses to attract mates, to fend off intruders, to warn conspecifics of impending doom. On the other side of the equation, natural selection favors receivers who discriminate accurately the nature and intentions of signalers from their display cues. Receivers who can discern whether a display indicates a real threat or a bluff, or whether a sexual display is a good indication of a signaler's actual genetic quality, are better equipped to leave a robust genetic legacy.

Again, the evidence from natural systems shows the importance of accurate discernment and credibility for message receivers. The evolution of the signal involves mutual feedback between both parties, also called ritualization, and is a result of both signaler and receiver selective pressures. It can be argued that this process is occurring in consumer advertising on an ongoing basis.

The signaler displays to achieve a result that amounts to a manipulation by influencing the receiver's behavior to benefit the signaler. The more effective the signaler is at eliciting a favorable response from the receiver, the more natural selection favors that individual's genes. The cost of signaling may be high,

however. Audible signaling, such as the calls of frogs, bats, and crickets, may be as effective at attracting predators or parasites as they are at attracting potential mates (Cade 1979; Tuttle & Ryan 1981; Sakaluk & Belwood 1984). Signals may also involve costly energetic investments (Ryan 1988; Prestwich 1994). Natural selection favors individuals whose displays incur lower risks and are energetically cheaper to produce (Johnstone 1997).

The effectiveness of signals over long distances is aided by a number of design features common to many different kinds of signals, making the task of detection easier. The “head-bobbing” displays of anoline lizards (Fleischman 1988a, 1988b, 1992) are a good example, in which territorial males flex a bright red throat for maximum visibility, then bob their heads up and down with ‘high acceleration, velocity, and amplitude’ from a high perch for maximum visibility at long distances, and repeat the display allowing maximal opportunity for observers to take note (Johnstone 1997).

Factors that affect signal evolution include signalers, receivers, and the physical environment. Animal signals intended for potential mates, for instance, may be received by individuals other than intended mates who interpret the call as “lunch” information rather than “sex” information. The more specifically a signaler can narrow a call to the capabilities of the intended receiver, the less risky calling would be. Effective signals for favorable responses should be

designed for detection by the sensory mechanisms of intended receivers (Ryan 1990; Guilford & Dawkins 1991; Endler 1992, 1993).

An even more effective signal would be designed to avoid detection by unwanted eavesdroppers such as predators and parasites. Every member of the audience of potential receivers, not just those that the signal is designed to reach, can influence the evolution of signaling behavior (McGregor 1993). If the subject of spam comes to mind, the same process of evolution is changing the way those messages are designed and received on a cultural level.

During mating season, or even at dusk, when a lot of signaling activity may be simultaneous in an environment, efficiently designed signals should communicate clearly and effectively with their intended receivers, no matter how much noise is going on in the environment. In a crowded environment, say, a waterhole, there could be a lot of signaling going on by signalers not intending to reach the same receivers. Elephants could be calling their offspring, crickets could be calling for mates, and birds could be marking their territories with song, all at the same time, for instance. Species that are active at the same season and at the same time have evolved distinctly different signals in order to minimize the impact of this kind of interference.

This suggests a refinement in strategy that could benefit advertisers of consumer goods. For instance, two companies that sell similar products but

target different niche markets would save money on signaling and avoid waste if they only invested in reaching actual potential customers instead of all customers for the category. Frogs have evolved strategies for exactly such a strategy.

Two species of narrow-mouth toads whose territories overlap in eastern Texas and Oklahoma provide an example. In most of their ranges, *Gastrophryne carolinensis* (Brand A) and *G. olivacea* (Brand B) occupy territories exclusive of each other, the former in the southeast, and the latter in the southwest. Males of both species advertise their attractiveness and availability to females with loud calling signals. Researchers recorded call signals obtained from several different locations which could be grouped according to the proximity of the two species: whether they overlapped, were adjacent, or occupied separate territories. The recordings clearly showed that *G. carolinensis* (Brand A) altered call frequencies when the other species (Brand B) was present or nearby (Loftus-Hills & Littlejohn 1992).

Signaling behavior may also be influenced by conspecifics. Signals may be designed for attraction of the same species, as for mating, or deterrents of the same species, as for competitors for mates (Greenfield 1994 a, 1994b). Male birds and mammals who breed in leks (recall that leks are like animal versions of rock concerts) provide abundant examples, as do call-signalling frogs and crickets. Young animals and birds in clutches or litters compete with each other

for food and parental attention by convincingly signaling for more. Prey animals compete with each other in herds to divert a predator's attention away from themselves, a subtle form of signaling that indicates a different victim or that the diverter would be a risky or costly target.

Signalers may have conflicting interests, such as competing offspring who selfishly attempt to gain a greater share of food, or they may cooperate to achieve mutually beneficial results such as the case of the dual-male courtship of the long-tailed manakin (an exotic bird), where a lower status male assists with the display of an alpha male, although claiming virtually none of the resulting matings (McDonald & Potts 1994). Whether the signalers cooperate or compete, however, the interaction can strongly influence their display behavior.

The design of animal displays is strongly influenced by the relatively static physical environment and the potentially transitional psychology of receivers, changing responses as rapidly as a signaler can change a display design. Receivers must adapt their responses to optimize the way they respond to signals as a basic function of selective pressure. The signaler may be motivated to manipulate, but the receiver is motivated to understand the signal as a potential source of information, not necessarily consistent with the desired manipulation of the signaler. For instance, parent bird returning to the nest with food would optimize their reproductive success by being able to determine which chick is

most in need of food as compared to which one is making the most obvious display with its gaping, crying, jostling, pushing siblings. The parents would benefit most by allocating resources equitably but the offspring would benefit by hogging food – they have conflicting goals.

The properties of conspicuousness, stereotypy, redundancy, and the presence of alerting elements are common to many different kinds of signals in the animal kingdom and generally serve to increase the reliability of detection (Wiley 1983). Often, it is the nature of the physical environment that contributes heavily to signal design, especially when signals are designed to be detected either visually or audibly over a long range.

Human culture exhibits similar behavior and has a long and storied history of signaling as a function of the physical environment, or at least, the environment defined within territorial boundaries. Those examples extend from feudal Europe to inner city gang wars, from ancient Greek city – states to present day athletic franchises. An example of territorial signaling modification follows.

Eight species of warblers (genus *Pylloscopus*) breeding in the forest of Kashmir, India, are all small and greenish in color. Each individual species has a particular assortment of pale color patches on their wings, crown, rump, and tail, which were found to be key to intraspecific communication, especially with regard to establishing and maintaining territories (Marchetti 1993). Experimental

manipulations of male coloration, using paint to enlarge or reduce various patches) directly affected the size of the territory with males whose patches were made more conspicuous achieving greater territories than males whose patches were made less conspicuous. Comparison of all eight species revealed that the more and brighter the patches of a species, the greater the tendency to occupy dark, dense habitats, while species with fewer patches tended to occupy open areas.

In the darker habitats, the ability to perceive visual displays is more difficult, and the warblers living in the darker habitats had brighter, more visible plumage signals. There was a negative correlation between habitat brightness and species brightness, suggesting that the properties of the physical environment occupied by these species had influenced the evolution of their plumage signals by increasing intensity (Marchetti 1993).

Another, broader, study of the male territorial songbirds of eastern North America suggests that the environment may also affect the particular form a signal takes. Wiley (1991) reviewed 120 species of songbirds whose song properties were documented and compared those song properties to the type of habitat occupied by the particular species of birds. A strong correlation was found between the physical environment and the temporal qualities of the song. Songbirds which occupied forest habitats which tend to dampen and degrade

particular types of sounds including short repetition periods, buzzes, and sidebands, tended to have songs with properties that circumvented the degradation effects of the environment. Songbirds living in open meadows sang with longer repetition periods, melodies and whistles (Wiley 1991), suggesting that the properties of the environment may have broad-ranging and ubiquitous effects for signal design.

Recently, the size of a forehead spot on a male flycatcher has been found to indicate his immune system's ability to fight off the avian flu virus. The larger the spot, the more antibodies the male produces, indicating a greater immune defense against future virus infections. Females of the species are using the forehead spot as a health indicator, selecting males with larger forehead spots as mates (Andersson et al 2006).

In primate societies, kinship, dominance, and sexual status regulate social interactions (Smuts et al 1987; Cheney & Seyfarth 1990), thereby systematically influencing the value of social information. In a series of experiments particularly relevant to the practice of advertising, researchers offered male rhesus monkeys a choice between juice or photographs of female rhesus monkey genitalia, high status monkey faces, and low status monkey faces. Male monkeys "paid," that is, gave up juice, to view female genitalia and high status monkey faces, but had to be paid *extra* juice to view low status monkey faces (Deaner et

al 2005). Males placed high value on visual access to female genitalia, which in the natural habitat induces profound behavioral changes in males, including visual inspections, mating attempts, and increased male-male competition (Nunn 1999).

The connection to advertising practice is not lost on anyone who has seen an ad for a mechanical object such as a motorcycle with a buxom, scantily clad woman draped over it, or watched MTV, and sheds an evolutionary perspective on the discourse of celebrity spokespersons. That male monkeys would prefer pictures of female genitalia to nourishment is a story that surprises few, and immediately reminds the advertising practitioner that to get a consumer to pay any attention at all to a mundane product often entails playing the ‘hot babe’ card. What is perhaps less obvious is the evolutionary logic behind preferences for images of high-status conspecifics. Deaner et al (2005) provide the first experimental evidence that monkeys discriminate images of other individuals based on social status, indicating knowledge of social relationships and speculated that primates engage in monitoring high status animals because it yields valuable social information.

All of the examples related above are relevant to the practice and theoretical interpretation of advertising. The fact that animal signals are interpreted in terms of energetic costs is not significantly different from

interpreting advertising signals in terms of dollars—these are the currencies of the respective groups. Animals conserve energy in much the way that people conserve money: so they will have some resources under the mattress or socked away in case things get scarce in the future. An animal who does not prepare and store resources for lean times to come frequently does not get to participate in the next round of reproduction. By the same token, brands that do not have positive year to year net gains in shareholder value do not get to keep those shareholders. Advertising represents a cost, but it is at the same time an investment in future revenue increases—in this way advertising signals are directly homologous to animal mating signals or territorial signals. The signal represents a necessary energy cost that is a direct investment in future gains.

The components of animal signaling are also remarkably similar to advertising signals. Male anole head-bobbing displays are comprised of components of high visibility, alerting components at the beginning of the display, repetitiveness, and stereotypy that ensures receivers will not mistake the source or meaning of the signals. Similar species whose territories overlap take necessary measures to avoid producing confusingly similar signals—an evolutionary development that most corporate attorneys would approve. Even signals of animal young are subject to the discernment and scrutiny of parents who must accurately determine which of their offspring is signaling truthfully vs.

which that are exaggerating. These are all skills that affect both the evolution of the signaler and the receiver, and translate from animal economics to human market systems naturally.

1.09 COOPERATIVE VS. NON-COOPERATIVE SIGNALING

In a cooperative signaling system, selection acting on receivers works in concert with selection acting on signalers, in both cases favoring efficient communication. This will occur whenever the signaler benefits by eliciting a response that is also to the advantage of the receiver. One of the best-known instances of cooperative signaling is the use of a dance ‘language’ by honey bees to convey to fellow hive members the exact location of food. Because a worker returning from a food source to the hive benefits by directing fellow workers to the resource, just as they benefit from the information it has to provide, selection on the receivers works in concert with selection on the signaler. This is an unusually precise form of communication, in that different aspects of the dance convey information about the distance to the food source, and about the direction that must be taken to reach it from the hive (von Frisch, 1967).

A simpler and more widespread example of cooperative communication is the advertisement of species identity during courtship. Both males and females

share an interest in pairing with members of their own species (although females may also benefit by exercising choice among conspecifics), and as a result males typically have evolved distinctive, species-specific displays, while females have evolved efficient mechanisms for their location and identification.

Although some signaling systems are cooperative, many kinds of communication involve a conflict of interest between signaler and receiver. Selection acting on each individual then opposes selection acting on the other, because the signaler stands to gain by provoking a response that is not to the advantage of the receiver. The exchange of threat displays during aggressive interactions provides a clear example of this kind of conflict of interest. Each participant would benefit from an accurate assessment of its opponent's fighting ability and motivational state, but each also stands to gain by misleading that opponent about its own ability, so as to more effectively deter resistance (Maynard Smith, 1974). Sexual signaling is another case in point. Although males and females share an interest in locating and pairing with conspecifics, males are typically under stronger selection to acquire many mates, while females are under stronger selection to acquire superior mates (Trivers 1972; Clutton-Brock & Vincent 1991; Clutton-Brock & Parker 1992; Johnstone et al 1996). Females would thus benefit from an accurate assessment of male mate

quality (allowing them to reject inferior partners), while males would benefit by misleading potential mates as to their own quality (so as to gain more matings).

As a final example, although parents would benefit by allocating food in relation to the hunger or need of their young, individual offspring stand to gain by misleading the parent as to their own level of need, because they are selected to acquire more food than the parent is selected to give (Trivers 1974; Parker & MacNair 1978; Godfray 1995a). In situations like these, communication is best viewed, not as an harmonious exchange of information, but as the focus of an arms race between signalers as manipulators, and receivers as ‘mind readers’ (Dawkins & Krebs 1978; Krebs & Dawkins 1984).

Early proponents of the ‘arms race’ approach suggested that, on an evolutionary time-scale, informative or honest signaling was unlikely to endure for very long. Maynard Smith (1974), for example, argued that threat displays conveying information about aggressiveness or level of escalation were unlikely to be stable. Suppose a population existed in which individuals did convey information about their intentions. If an individual found that its opponent was announcing a higher level of escalation than its own, it would pay to retreat at once. Consequently, a ‘deceitful’ mutant that invariably announced a very high level of aggressiveness, regardless of its true intentions, would be favored by

selection because its opponents would always back down. Before long, everyone would be lying, and it would then pay to ignore the signal altogether.

The same argument can, with slight modification, be applied to any other situation in which there is a conflict of interest between signaler and receiver. Whenever a correlation exists between signaling behavior and the underlying state of the signaler (i.e., whenever the signal is informative), the population appears to be vulnerable to invasion by a ‘lying’ mutant that adopts the signals typical of individuals in a different state, and thereby elicits a more favorable response.

There are, however, properties of signal design that can help to maintain honesty, even in the face of a conflict of interest, by making it impossible or unprofitable for signalers to employ a display that is not representative of their state. It is not necessary, therefore, to abandon the idea that animal signals convey information of value to receivers. Instead, one can argue that the displays seen in nature should simply be designed in such a way that they are not vulnerable to corruption by deceit. This offers a new ‘strategic’ perspective on signal evolution, which differs from the ‘efficacy based’ approach detailed above. If selection favors reliability as well as efficiency, then some aspects of signal design may have evolved to ensure honesty rather than to facilitate detection (Johnstone 1997).

The concept of cooperative vs non-cooperative signaling is particularly interesting in light of current experiments in advertising strategies. According to evolutionary theory, the presence of a showy display suggests a non-cooperative signal. That is, the producer of the showy display is motivated to manipulate a receiver into a behavior that may not be in the receiver's best interest. This suggests that in human cultures and market economies, the interests of the advertisers who display showy ads are perhaps not as aligned with the needs of the market as marketers would prefer to think. Perhaps showy ads and costly displays are designed that way to overcome the fundamental differences between advertising signalers' motivations and receivers' best interests. Or, perhaps, they are creating the situation where at some point consumers will assume they are all lying and ignore everything.

Interestingly, the fastest growing category of advertising in the current advertising year is key word searches for search engines such as Google. These are cases where a consumer enters a search for, say, winter boots, and gets a list of web resources. The main list is supplemented by a short list of 'sponsored links' that have been purchased by advertisers in an auction for specific search words. This amounts to cooperative signaling, and occurs on a much subtler, discrete, and quiet level. Cooperative signaling occurs between animals

(consumers) with aligned goals and motives, while non-cooperative signaling is manipulative, showy, noisy, and intrusive.

1.10 SIGNAL SPECIFICITY STRATEGIES

Signals often do convey reliable information about the state or condition of the signaler (at least ‘on average), and in some cases they are designed in such a way as to prevent this reliability being compromised by deceit. There have been few attempts, however, to account for differences in signal design among species (or among the different displays of a single species) in terms of selection for reliability. Zahavi (1977, 1987) has argued that costs of signal production can only help to maintain honesty if the ability to bear those costs depends on the aspects of signaler condition that are being advertised. Consequently, he suggests there is a necessary link between the form of a display and the information that it conveys.

Honest advertisement of nutritional condition and energy reserves, for example, should require a signal that is energetically costly, while advertisement of escape ability should require a signal that entails a costly increase in the risk of capture by predators. However, this approach has not been used yet to generate testable predictions, for two main reasons. First, the requirement that a signal

should entail a certain type of cost does not impose much of a restriction on its design, and so does not allow one to draw detailed conclusions about its likely form. Advertisement of nutritional condition, for example, may require an energetically costly signal, but this could take the form of vocal display, strenuous posturing, or many other types of behavior. Second, the costs involved in the production of many signals may be imposed by the behavior of receivers, rather than being physically concomitant upon display. In these cases, the design of the signal is 'conventional,' because the appropriate receiver response (imposing whatever kinds of cost are necessary for the maintenance of honesty) can be elicited by a display of any kind (Guilford & Dawkins 1995).

In human culture, advertising signals should evolve to fit form and information to audience preferences to ensure honesty. With human audiences becoming less and less tolerant of intrusive advertising and exercising more and more ways to eliminate unwanted messages, advertisers are turning more and more to forced ad viewing such as interstitial ads, and recently hit on the idea of making it impossible to switch television channels during the commercial break (Ephron 2006). While this could be a great way to squeeze value out of the advertising dollar, it is doubtless that a lot of consumers who find themselves subjected to such fascist measures will adopt a less favorable view toward the offending brands.

CHAPTER 2

ADVERTISER FITNESS

2.01 THE HANDICAP PRINCIPLE

Ornamentation may have an aesthetic appeal, but the key to its success is that it involves a real cost to generate and maintain good ornamentation, giving female choosers accurate information regarding the health and robustness of the displayer of the ornament. The ornamentation guarantees the ornamented individual's fitness and explains why costly ornaments such as the peacock's tail evolved in the first place (Zahavi 1975). This is known as *The Handicap Principle*, and it comes with a big catch: no matter how males adapt to the preferences of females, for brighter plumage, longer tail feathers, or faster cars, females will still be attracted to brighter and bigger ornamentation yet, demanding more and more extreme effects (Miller 2000).

In order to judge the quality of a particular male's display, females would have to be clever and discerning enough to be good judges of display quality, setting up a feedback loop by which females have to stay a step ahead of males. On the other hand, to produce a good display, a male would have to have a way

of anticipating how the display will be judged. According to the Handicap Principle, preferences for costly display set up an expectation that even more costly displays will be preferred in time. The ability of displayers to produce high cost advertisements acts as a guarantee that they are “fit” and speaks to the evolved preferences of social animals (Miller 2000).

2.02 FITNESS INDICATORS

It is to the female’s advantage to be able to pick the most fit male available for fathering her brood. Unusually fit fathers tend to have unusually fit offspring. One of the functions of courtship would be the advertisement, by a male, of how fit he is. A male whose general health and nutrition enables him to indulge in full development of secondary sexual characters, especially courtship behavior, is likely to be reasonably fit genetically. Other important signs of fitness would be the ability to occupy a choice nesting site and a large territory, and the power to defeat or intimidate other males. In submitting only to a male with such signs of fitness a female would probably be aiding the survival of her own genes. (Williams 1966, p 184).

The human mind’s evolution may be considered in terms of condition-dependence trait selection (Rowe & Houle 1996). In the Rowe & Houle model,

all fitness indicators begin as ordinary traits with certain costs. Since higher-fitness individuals can afford to allot more energy to their fitness budget, they are better able to afford the more expensive traits. Regardless of how a trait may come to be favored, individuals with more extreme, costlier versions of the trait will be more successful at spreading their genes, thereby increasing the average level of fitness in the population (the trait also acts as a weak fitness indicator). The greater the pressure placed on the trait by sexual selection, the more the trait must be allocated resources in the individual's energy budget. Individuals who allocate a little energy will lose out to individuals who allocate a lot of energy. The greater the share of an organism's resources that are allocated for a sexually selected trait, the more dependent sexual selection becomes on the organism's total fitness budget.

The trait can be quickly transformed from a cheap ordinary trait into a true handicap with large energy costs attached. Condition-dependence increases, and increasing condition-dependence is an ever more valuable source of information about fitness. Sexual selection can turn ordinary traits into good fitness indicators. (Rowe & Houle 1996)

Good fitness indicators give sexual choice a panoramic view of a potential mate's genetic quality (Miller 2000). In advertising, a fitness indicator would give a consumer a panoramic view of a brand's potential value as a

lifestyle investment. That seems like a huge leap, to jump from choosing mates using genetic quality indicators directly to choosing products or services using advertising as quality indicators, but the groundwork for consumers' experience of brands as personalities is already well established. Priester et al (2004) investigated the influence of attitudes and attitude strength on consideration and choice and determined that because greater positive brand attitude leads to likelihood of inclusion in a consideration set, advertisers should increase their exposure to increase linking and achieve top of mind recall.

2.03 BRANDS AS PERSONALITIES

MacInnis and Park (2005) compare an individual's emotional attachment to a brand to an individual's emotional attachment to another person, suggesting that the degree of emotional attachment to an object predicts the nature of an individual's interaction with the object. Stronger attachments are thought to lead to greater commitment, investment in, and sacrifices for the attachment object (Bowlby 1980; Hazan & Shaver 1994). Bowlby (1980) defines attachment as "an emotion-laden target-specific bond between a person

and a specific object.” Strong emotional attachments to particular others serve a basic human need (Ainsworth et al 1978; Bowlby 1980).

Brand attachments are further developed into relationships with brands (Fournier 1998). True relationships are characterized as having interdependence between partners: partners collectively affect, define, and redefine the relationship (Hinde 1979). Fournier showed that to legitimize the brand-as-partner relationship, brands are animated, humanized, or somehow personalized, effectively anthropomorphizing inanimate objects or abstract entities. Virtually every society has engaged in such anthropomorphizing since time immemorial (Brown 1991). In fact, some researchers argue that a felt need to anthropomorphize objects in order to facilitate interactions with the nonmaterial world is key to the concept of animism (McDougall 1911; Gilmore 1919; Nida & Smalley 1959).

Animism is generally defined as the belief in souls, or the idea that objects, either living or not, have souls. When consumers engage in animistic behavior, it is often seen in the ‘naming’ of consumption objects such as cars, motorcycles, boats, and other means of conveyance – but it is also seen in the way some people treat their personal computers, their cell phones, and other types of goods. Consumers consistently and assign personality qualities to inanimate brand objects (Aaker 1997), think about brands as if they were human

characters (Levy 1985; Plummer 1985), and in articulating their own relationship with the brand (Blackston 1993).

That brands have personalities is established (Plummer 2000; Kim et al 2001; Aaker 1997), and brands invest heavily in creating and nurturing consumer perceptions of their personalities. Personal constructs are applied over a wide range of perceptual events (Kelly 1955), and individuals bring personal constructs to bear in forming impressions of material entities (Hunt et al 1996).

Personal possessions take on meanings much deeper than utilitarian objects. Possessions are regarded as parts of human personalities (Tuan 1980). The idea that people are what people have (James 1890; Feirstein 1986; Rosenbaum 1972) is a basic construct in consumer behavior (Belk 1988). In his classic work laying the foundations of modern concepts of the self, William James (1890) suggested that people are the sum of their material, personal, and business relationships:

A man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands, and yacht and bank-account. All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down, --

not necessarily in the same degree for each thing, but in much the same way for all. (William James 1890)

Jennifer Aaker (1997) applied a conceptualization of brand personality based on research in human personality. She states that the understanding of the symbolic use of brands has been limited in the consumer behavior literature, and develops a theoretical framework of brand personality dimensions and discusses their implications. This is important work because it begins to deconstruct the human associations of consumers for consumer goods, and specifies human characteristics for them, suggestive of animistic behavior or the assignment of human attributes to objects. She arrives at a classification system of five brand personality dimensions (see Figure 2.01) which are directly analogous to the mythological attributes of the archetypal “gods,” in this case, Roman, but the archetypes transcend culture and exist by other names in other times and other places (Campbell 1968). Aaker’s model is useful in that it points to the personification factors for brands as symbols, and because her categories link directly to mythical constructs that have existed for the duration of human history, it is reasonable to conclude that these categories are stable through time.

Once it is understood that the personality traits are assorted into categories consistent with archetypal symbols expressed throughout time as mythological personalities, it becomes much more apparent how such

information might be applied to the creative development of a brand, and how such manipulation in the marketplace contributes to the brand loyalty exhibited in brand communities. Aaker suggests that the weak empirical support for self-congruity effects is the focus on matching the personality between a brand and a consumer at the aggregate level (i.e. across all personality traits), could point to a more appropriate practice of examining the dimensions of personalities in order to understand their centrality to the self.



Figure 2.1. Brand Personality Framework (Aaker 1997) , combined with corresponding Classical Mythological Personalities

Brand personification is nothing new. Mickey Mouse, Mr. Whipple, and Tony the Tiger are well known brand personality icons with cultural histories. Behind these icons stand parent brands: Disney, Procter & Gamble, Kellogg's.

While the personalities of the product brands may help position the product, the attributes of the parent brand contribute to a richer personality profile. The product has provenance, a pedigree, and there is a real person or persons behind the icon. Brands acquire social traits in one form or another because that is how consumers have relationships (McLaren 2001).

These loyal users are the source of profits for mass-market brands, the twenty percent of users that generate eighty percent of revenue and profits (Anschuetz 1997). With brand loyalty declining, the acquisition and maintenance of loyal users is critical to future success of brands and developing those loyal users requires a strong broad brand popularity. Once established, the brand myth supersedes quality-determining attributes (Van Osselaer & Alba 1997).

Frito-Lay had one of their most successful campaigns ever with the introduction of "The Frito Bandito," a personality that was oft-quoted in regular conversation, generated a high level of symbolic associations (Riskey, 2001). The Jolly Green Giant, the Keebler Elves, Mr. Clean, the Morton Salt Girl, Betty Crocker, and Aunt Jemima, all give personality and mythological dimension to

otherwise mundane products. When IBM adopted Charlie Chaplin as a product icon, and Macintosh launched the “Think Different” campaign featuring creative personalities, they were leveraging mythological associations and attempting to confer personality. However, consumers are aware that advertising messages are constructed and that the Keebler elves only represent the advertiser. No one believes that the personality of the University of Texas is that of a longhorn steer. The personality of the advertiser goes much deeper than that. Consumers must look beyond the putative personality to assess the true motives of the advertiser.

Consumers may have complicated relationships with their possessions, imbuing their stuff with self-symbolic meaning (Belk, 1988), self-verification (Fournier 1998), and value (Prentice 1987). Purchased products may be used as proxy evidence for social standing or eligibility (Bhat & Reddy 1998). Indeed, for consumer products that signal social status, many people are more willing to conform to the standards of the social group than risk a departure that will impair their status (Bernheim, 1994). Belonging to a group with clear parameters of behavior and status signals minimizes the risk of negative outcomes to the self through normalization of self-concept, self-identification, and consumption choices (Briley & Wyer, 2002).

There is increasing evidence that the intensities and super-saturation of the American communication experience is driving consumers to self-

management strategies that include brand assimilation/identification as a self-presentation strategy, and brand consumption as personality identification. EBay searches for some of these brands – for instance, Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Mac (Kahney 2002), Harley Davidson (DiCarlo 2001), The Grateful Dead, Rocky Horror, Barbie, Target (Branch 1999), Starbucks (Bedbury 2002), Star Wars, and others have achieved cult status among their adherents. Despite the proliferation of brand sponsorship, ubiquitous advertising and the resulting backlash engendered among America's youth (Klein 2000/2002), product benefits such as the feeling of enhanced self-presentation or enhanced life benefits have broad consumer appeal (Bhat & Reddy 1998).

Brand personalities, the set of human characteristics associated with a brand, enable a consumer to express his or her own self (Belk 1988), an ideal self (Malhotra 1988), or specific dimensions of the self (Kleine et al 1993) through the use of a brand. Self-identification with a brand through brand personality attractiveness, distinctiveness, and self-expressive values results in conversation about the brand and brand loyalty (Kim et al 2001). For example, later-aged female teens have been shown to identify closely with clothing brands, and their choice of brands has importance from a social attribution and a social influence position (Taylor & Cosenza 1992). A caveat to be kept in mind is that consumers' reports of what they want and how they decide among choices is also

a function of temporary contextual influences, sort of a “garbage-in, garbage-out” recitation (Shavitt & Wanke 2001; Simonson et al 2001).

Research has shown that brands are used as self-references by people for self-verification or self-enhancement goals (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Consumer products may be selected for their aspirational qualities. For instance, cigarette brands enjoy the highest brand loyalty of all consumer products with less than 10% changing brands annually (Wakefield et al 2002). Cigarette brands are selected largely on the basis of packaging, with consumers selecting brands “embodying qualities we wish we had, the lives we wish we could lead, the great escapes we wish we could make” (Thiboudeau 2000). Actual differences between cigarette products are minimal, so brand image is the factor that distinguishes cigarettes. Cigarette packaging, thus, is a critical communication device creating and reinforcing brand imagery and self-identification (Wakefield et al 2002). Thus, brand image is important for young smokers in decision making for brand choice.

The brands young people embrace become their friends, and they engage in relationships with their brands to make sure they are up to date and their brand friends remain cool. As in friendships, teens can have mixed emotions about their chosen brands, but the overall balance of positive vs. negative affect must come down on the positive side for the brand to continue to be embraced

(Williams & Aaker 2002). In addition, when a brand is considered cool, hip, and desirable, it's advertising tends to be more persuasive (Drolet & Aaker 2002).

Clearly, the extent to which brands are treated as personalities is extensive. People use brands as proxies for their own personality in addition to perceiving the brand as a personality. In this sense, brands become member entities in a community comprised of consumers and consumables, choosers and choices, or voters and candidates. Since people arrived at these communities through a long process of evolution, the mechanisms by which choices are made had to evolve in a landscape far less rich in terms of consumption goods. Discrimination had to evolve in a forum that had selective consequences, and the consequences, logically, are that consumers now use existing choice processes to make consumption choices.

2.04 BRAND EVOLUTION

In brand management theory, the brand is a layered construct that corresponds to an actual person who interacts with a market, selling product and touting wares throughout a lifetime, just like a person. To understand a brand through time it should be viewed through a three-tiered hierarchy incorporating the time dimension (Figure 2.02). Using Kapferer's (2002) model, at the top

level is the brand's focal point, which represents the way the brand speaks and acts, its objective personality. The interior aspects of the brand psychology should be known but unspoken—the essential structure of a brand's core identity, permanent and consistent over time, just as a person's psychological profile should be consistent over time (Kapferer 1992, French 2001). This unconscious core of the brand must remain so, at least to consumers, to be effective.

At the next level, the style and codes of the brand are expressed. Brand style is how the brand messages in words and pictures are conveyed and reflects the brand's core identity. It can be compared to the handwriting of an individual, expressive and unique. Over time, brand style may change as a woman may change her wardrobe to adapt to fashion over time, but her personal style may remain consistent in her manner of following trends. It would confuse the market if a brand personality known for sleek and modern styling suddenly switched to a nostalgic, flower child look and feel, for instance. A person with a consistent style would evolve more slowly, from one sleek, modern iteration to something perhaps more colorful or playful without losing the attributes of sleek and modern. Similarly, brand style evolves and changes, but should do so in a manner consistent with its core identity.

The third tier of the hierarchy comprises the communication themes and current advertising positioning. Customers know brands by products, themes,

positioning and style of communication. Long-term brand management requires a clear understanding of the brand's core structure and legitimate territory. Communication and promises should be authentic reflections of that source.

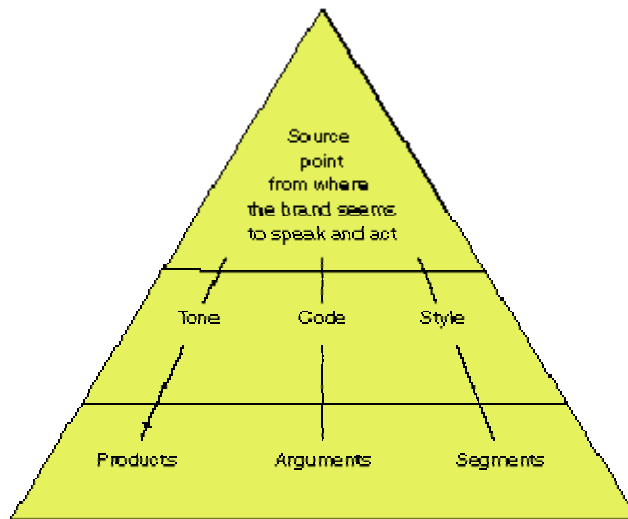


Figure 2.2. Brand Hierarchy Pyramid (Kapferer 1992)

Indeed, recent research confirms that certain favorable brand impressions, reiterated to some threshold level, create more or less indelible memories in consumers. TV ads are particularly suited to super-long term memories and have

been found to remain for over 30 years with high recognition rates and clear memories with respect to ad concepts as well as execution elements: verbal, visual and acoustic (Kishi et al 2001).

The culmination of these layers is an abstract entity, a brand, that has a psychology, a history, a style, and a consistency that exists in time and in relationships with customers or consumers. The brand may be abstract—even virtual, but it is nevertheless consistent with other personal entities with whom people have relationships, and it is in that context that people make discriminating choices. These deconstructions of the brand as an abstract entity and as a personality reinforce the notion that the combination of unique abstract qualities with a perceived personality can be juxtaposed with the ways different people relate to brands and their animated qualities for additional insights into consumer behavior.

2.05 CREATIVITY AS A FITNESS INDICATOR

The things that make advertising salient are not the similarities between social groups, but the differences. Distinctions make salient the inclusion in one social group versus the out-group “other,” so it is important for advertising

research to probe deeply into the psychological and social constructs that bind separate groups tightly or loosely to better understand the uses and influences of advertising, media, social groups. Building a body of understanding in this area will help advertising researchers and professionals predict propensity to persuasion, cultural change, and adoption of new ideas based on social affiliations.

Recently, some authors are saying that consumers are too cynical to pay attention to mass marketers at all and that consumers themselves have all the power and influence in the marketplace (Holt, 2004). According to this view, the primary influence on consumers is not the ubiquitous presence of advertising, but the enthusiasm of a co-worker for a new gadget or the social need to fit in.

To be capable of mental anticipation, one must be capable of developing expectations about another person's behavior. To be capable of judging someone's creativity, one must be able to judge the violation of expectations in terms of novelty and relevance. The processes for generating expectations about someone else's stories, jokes, or music may be closely related to the processes used in producing original stories, jokes, and music (Miller 2000). To judge who tells the best jokes, judges may benefit by evolving joke-telling ability (Miller 2000).

To suggest that a mental capacity like human creative intelligence evolved as a fitness indicator is not just to throw another possible function into the arena of human evolution theories. This is not a function like hunting, tool-making, or socializing that contributes directly to fitness by promoting survival and reproduction. Instead, fitness indicators serve a sort of meta-function. They sit on top of other adaptations, proclaiming their virtues. Fitness indicators are to ordinary adaptations what literary agents are to authors, or what advertisements are to products. Of course, they are adaptations in their own right, just as literary agents are people too, and just as advertisements are also products—the products of advertising firms. But fitness indicators work differently. They take long vacations. They are social and sales-oriented. They live in the semiotic space of symbolism and strategic deal-making, not in the gritty world of factory production. The healthy brain theory proposes that our minds are clusters of fitness indicators: persuasive salesmen like art, music and humor that do their best work in courtship, where the most important deals are made. (Miller 2000, p 105)

Human capacities for music, art, creativity, humor, and poetry are not like ordinary adaptations. Ordinary mental adaptations generally adhere to criteria that have been identified by evolutionary psychologists (Barkow et al 1992; Buss 1999; Hirschfeld & Gelman 1994; Pinker 1994, 1997). Human mental traits evolved through natural selection for specific functions generally show small differences between people because selection should eliminate maladaptive

variation. These traits generally have low heritability because selection would be expected to eliminate maladaptive variation, they should be low in cost, efficient, modular, and specialized for solving particular problems.

Fitness indicators follow none of these criteria because for fitness indicators to work as credible sources of information, it has to show up the differences between individuals, be highly heritable to tap into genetic variation in fitness, and wasteful—not efficient. High costs should emphasize the inefficiency of production of fitness indicators compared to survival adaptations, and fitness indicator production must be interdependent on an individual's total level of genetic fitness, not modular and separate from other adaptations, in order to capture a broad spectrum of health, fertility, intelligence, and overall fitness (Miller 2000). The peacock's tail fits this profile as a fitness indicator, and many human mental abilities do as well.

Human abilities such as music, humor, and creativity would not fit an evolutionary psychologist's criteria for adaptations because they are variable, heritable, wasteful, and not modular—but they are exactly the kinds of traits that would make excellent fitness indicators (Miller 2000). Humans have evolved efficient mechanisms for regulating breathing, exercising motor control over muscles and appendages, maintaining balance, discriminating between colors, remembering locations, foraging, raising offspring, processing pain messages,

remembering faces, making friends, punishing cheaters, perceiving social status, estimating risks, etc. (Pinker 1997). Most of these traits are shared with other species and are consistent with the expectations of natural selection for survival and living in social groups.

Creativity as a fitness indicator would affect both sexes in humans (Fisher 1930; Williams 1966), which sets up the possibility investigating further how fitness indicators might illuminate consumer advertising. Miller argues that in addition to functioning as a survival machine, the human brain can be viewed as a set of sexually selected fitness indicators with high costs as an integral part of overall fitness.

Sexual selection made our brains wasteful, if not wasted: it transformed a small, efficient ape-style brain into a huge, energy-hungry handicap spewing out luxury behaviors like conversation, music, and art. These behaviors may look as if they must be conveying some useful information from one mind to another, but from a biological viewpoint they might signify nothing more than our fitness, to those who might be considering merging their genes with ours. The better our ancestors became at articulating their thoughts, the deeper the principles of wasteful sexual signaling could reach into their minds. By favoring fitness indicators, sexual choice demanded courtship behavior that stretched the mind's capacities. It demanded that which is difficult. It forced the human brain to evolve ever greater condition-dependence, and ever greater sensitivity to harmful mutations. It asked not what a brain

can do for its owner, but what fitness information about the owner a brain can reveal. (Miller 2000, pp 134-135)

Creativity is particularly meta-behavior, a complex behavior that fuels complex development of other, more simple behaviors such as tool-making or hunting. Creativity is a quality that delights and surprises, introduces novelty and makes people take notice. Creative intelligence plays in the arena of courtship, where the best deals are made (Miller 2000). Over time, evolutionary psychologists say that human females preferred creative displays as fitness indicators, displays that stretched the mind's capacity and showed off better genes. As humans became better at articulating their thoughts, creative fitness indicators could reach deeper and deeper into the adaptive mind (Miller 2000).

Till & Baack (2005) studied the potential effectiveness of creativity in advertising in enhancing recall, brand attitude, and purchase intent, and found that more creative spots generated significantly greater brand and execution recall on an unaided basis, but did not have an effect on purchase intent or attitude toward the brand. They suggested that creative advertising may actually bestow value to the advertised brand (Till & Baack 2005). One way to bestow value would be to use creativity to signal advertiser fitness, demonstrating that the advertiser has greater 'genetic' value than its less creatively innovative competitors.

On an otherwise level playing field, consumers should prefer advertisers that display unusual levels of intelligent creativity. Dimensions of creativity: intelligence, originality, novelty, and humor should be more appealing to consumers when advertiser fitness appears to be otherwise similar, indicated by similarity of products, services, values, and company strength.

2.06 CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISER FITNESS

As with early humans dodging bears and hostile neighbors because they understood the motivations of players in the environment whose motivations were incompatible with their own, contemporary humans should weigh motivations of signalers in their environments. Comprehension and discrimination should be processed in ways that are not cognitively taxing, and theory suggests that the mechanisms are in place to make accurate assessments most of the time, thanks to Overall fitness should be gauged by consumers as perception of different fitness indicators accumulates. Economic signaling would be represented when an advertiser advertises often, but there are other economic indicators that can be read from a single viewing of an ad.

High production values that reflect economic investment in an ad would make an immediate impression. Viewers are sophisticated consumers of media production values and should be able to tell whether an ad employs high or low production values. Behavioral signaling would be represented by creative intelligence, using innovative thinking, novelty, wit, and humor. Consumers should have awareness that the showy display television advertiser is attempting to manipulate a response, and part of their assessment of the advertiser is their impression as to whether the advertiser is doing their job well or poorly, appreciating the intelligence of the receiver or insulting him, for instance.

An advertiser who broadcasts a lot of advertisements using very high production values, creative intelligence, and unusual wit is expected to rate higher in Advertiser Fitness than an advertiser who broadcasts a minimum number of spots with poor to mediocre production values and a strictly informative message. It is further expected that an advertisement with mediocre production values can overcome lack of creative intelligence by spending more on frequent broadcasting, and that higher levels of creative intelligence in advertising may overcome a less than optimum broadcast schedule, in terms of consumer perception of advertiser fitness. In the former case, the strategy is to produce so many impressions of the advertiser that the consumer can't help but perceive that a lot of money was spent. In the latter case, the advertising is so

creatively conceived that people will talk about it and it may even enter into consumer's impressions of the time, or zeitgeist.

2.07 ADVERTISER FITNESS MODEL

The integration of the foregoing discussion into a model of Advertiser Fitness is shown in Figure 2.3. The construct of Advertiser Fitness is built on the platform of perceived signal quality, comprised of Perceived Cost (Milgrom & Roberts 1986, Miller 2000, Farrell 1980, Gerstner 1985, Spence 1974, Erdem et al 2005, Erdem & Swait 1998, Clark et al 2001) and Perceived Creativity (Miller 2000, Till & Baack 2005). Based on the suggestions of these diverse authors representing economic and psychological theories, Perceived Cost is developed through the dimensions of production quality, special effects (SFX) quality, and special effects impression. Perceived Creativity is developed through the dimensions of concept quality, appropriateness, entertainment, and intelligence. The items in the survey are explicated for each dimension in the Results Chapter (this document) and in Appendix B: Questionnaires.

In addition to developing these aspects of perceptions of the quality of the overt signal, the Advertiser Fitness construct has associated perceptions of a more abstract nature: *Perceived Honesty*, *Perceived Status*, *Self Relevance*, and *Potential Word of Mouth*.

- ***Perceived Honesty*** (suggested by Maynard Smith 1974, Trivers 1974, Dawkins & Krebs 1984, Guilford & Dawkins 1995, Johnstone 1997, Zahavi 1977, Miller 2000, Fournier 1998, Rowe & Houle 1996) is developed through dimensions of personal opinion of the brand, perceived authenticity, perceived truthfulness of the message, and perceived honesty of the advertiser.
- ***Perceived Status*** (suggested by Buss & Dekay 1996, Bhat & Reddy 1998, Bernheim 1994, Briley & Wyer 2002, Taylor & Cosenza 1992, Pinker 19997, MacInnes & Park 2005, Fournier 1998, Aaker 1997, Levy 1985, Plummer 1985, Plummer 2000) is developed through dimensions of perceived influentiality of the brand, perceived market status of the brand, perception of the brand as an attractive personality, and perception of the brand's position in the product category.
- ***Self Relevance*** (suggested by Belk 1988, Fournier 1998, Prentice 1987, Kapferer 2002, Roy & Cornwell 2003, Escalas & Bettman 2003, Wakefield et al 2002, Ryan 1990, Guilford & Dawkins 1991, Endler

1993, Loftus-Hills & Littlejohn 1992, Marchetti 1993) is developed through dimensions of the message stimulating personal awareness of desire for the product, perception of the advertiser's understanding of the individual, perception of congruent values, perception of congruent attitudes or behaviors.

- ***Potential Word of Mouth*** (suggested by Kim et al 2001, Holt 2004) is developed through dimensions of memorability, coolness, and perceived likelihood of talking about the ad in a social context.

These theoretical dimensions of Advertiser Fitness are all derived from divergent sources and developed here as related to the way people evaluate advertising using automatic heuristics that evolved out of important aspects of species survival and evolution. If Advertiser Fitness is shown to be a valid construct, these measures should also be associated with traditional measures of advertising effectiveness, including Attitude Toward the Ad, Attitude Toward the Brand, and Purchase Intent.

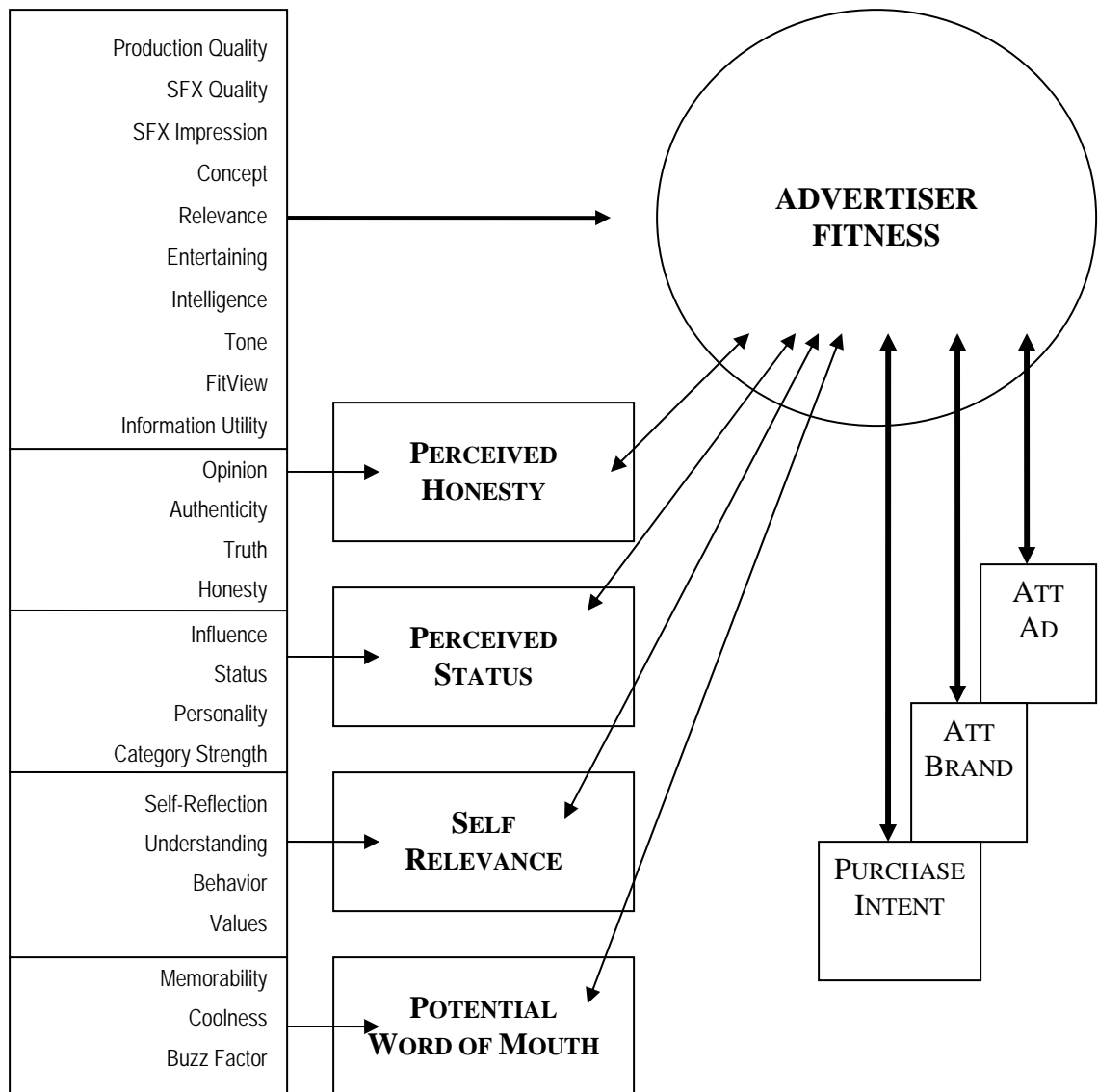


Figure 2.3. Theoretical construction of Advertiser Fitness is comprised of perceptions of dimensions reflecting perceived cost and creativity factors. Advertiser Fitness is projected to be associated with Perceived Honesty (Opinion, Authenticity, Truth, Honesty); Perceived Status (Influence, Status, Attractiveness of Brand Personality, Category Strength); Self-Relevance (Self-Reflection, Advertiser Understanding of Consumer, Advertiser Behavior, Advertiser Values); and Potential Word of Mouth (Memorability, Coolness, Buzz Factor).

CHAPTER 3

HYPOTHESES

Charles Darwin first proposed the concept of sexual selection in 1871, distinguishing between sexual selection, which proceeds on preferences for some individuals over others of the same sex, and natural selection, which proceeds on the survival of both sexes (Darwin 1871). The idea of some individuals being more successful than others was expanded by Thorstein Veblen in his classic satirical commentary on consumerism, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, first published in 1899. This work, now considered one of the great works of economics, argued that vestiges of pre-historic life informed economic life rather than the popular notion of utility, and that human social behavior is based on variations of primitive tribal organization.

The Theory of the Leisure Class argued that in human communities, status is conferred by wasting resources through conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. Conspicuous consumption was famously illustrated by the use of silver eating utensils when less expensive ones worked just as well, and often better. Conspicuous leisure, the wasted time people consume to give

themselves higher status, would include “gentleman” activities such as studying philosophy and fine arts, and going to the opera.

The theoretical development of the present work extends these ideas beyond the level of the individual in society and applies them to the abstract entities created by humans which carry on business: corporations, institutions, and specifically, brand advertisers. If one accepts that the way humans behave may be related to pre-historic developments in the human brain, it is only a natural extension to ascribe the evaluation of present abstract entities such as brands to parallel processes.

The Handicap Principle (Zahavi 1975) posits that costly display guarantees the displayer’s fitness and explains why such costly display has evolved over time. According to the Handicap Principle, preferences for costly display set up an expectation that even more costly displays will be preferred in time. The ability of displayers to produce high cost advertisements acts as a guarantee that they are “fit” and speaks to the evolved preferences of social animals. Higher costs are also seen as a guarantee of advertiser honesty insofar as producing the higher cost advertisement requires the expenditure of resources held in reserve. Higher perceived cost, then, signals greater reserves and therefore, greater ability to produce reserved resources.

Consumers should prefer credibility and attractiveness of advertisers who spend more than they have to, thereby incurring a handicap to display their 'genetic' advertising desirability or 'fitness.' Therefore, more favorable ratings of advertisers who employ higher production values, cool special effects, big-name celebrities, and more profligate use of air time are expected.

Overall fitness should be gauged by consumers as perception of different fitness indicators accumulates. An advertiser who broadcasts a lot of advertisements using very high production values, creative intelligence, and unusual wit is expected to rate higher than an advertiser who broadcasts a minimum number of spots with poor to mediocre production values and a strictly informative message. It is further expected that an advertisement with mediocre production values can overcome lack of creative intelligence by spending more on frequent broadcasting, and that higher levels of creative intelligence in advertising may overcome a less than optimum broadcast schedule, in terms of consumer perception of advertiser fitness. In the former case, the strategy is to produce so many impressions of the advertiser that the consumer can't help but perceive that a lot of money was spent. In the latter case, the advertising is so creatively conceived that people will talk about it and it may even enter into consumer's impressions of the time, or zeitgeist.

Creative intelligence has evolved as a fitness indicator that affects both men and women (Fischer 1930; Williams 1966). Creativity is particularly meta-behavior, a complex behavior that fuels complex development of other, more simple behaviors such as tool-making or hunting. Creativity is a quality that delights and surprises, introduces novelty and makes people take notice. Creative intelligence plays in the arena of courtship, where the best deals are made (Miller 2000). Over time, evolutionary psychologists say that human females preferred creative displays as fitness indicators, displays that stretched the mind's capacity and showed off better genes. As humans became better at articulating their thoughts, creative fitness indicators could reach deeper and deeper into the adaptive mind (Miller 2000).

On an otherwise level playing field, consumers should prefer advertisers that display unusual levels of intelligent creativity. Dimensions of creativity to be measured include intelligence, originality, novelty, style, relevance and humor. Advertisers who produce more “creative” spots are expected to generate higher favorability as compared to those who produce less creative spots.

H1: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness and perceived visual quality, special effects quality, special effects impression, intelligence, appropriateness, concept quality, and entertainment value.

It is expected that consumers will perceive advertisers who spend more money on production and broadcast as higher in status, signaling higher advertiser fitness. The presence of a celebrity spokespersons and obvious special effects should signal greater financial display and therefore act as handicap fitness indicators. In addition to cues such as celebrity spokespersons and obvious special effects, consumers may hold beliefs about the pecking order of brands in a category which may influence their perceptions of status. As developed in Chapter Two of this document, attractive brand personality traits, perceived status, and perceived category strength are associated with greater brand equity. Brands have importance from a social attribution and social influence position for some consumers (Taylor & Cosenza 1992). If a consumer believes an advertiser is influential, enjoys high status, has an attractive brand personality, or is a category leader, higher advertiser fitness is expected.

H2a: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Status and perceived advertiser influentiaity, attractiveness of personality, status, and category strength.

H2b: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Status and Advertiser Fitness.

The associations explored in hypotheses one and two evoke but do not explicitly state the idea of the brand as a personality. It is necessary to flesh out the construct of brand as personality in an evolutionary sense to fully grasp the nature of Advertiser Fitness. In this construct, the Advertiser is seen as the designer and producer of signals that authentically reflect its attractiveness as a genetic investment. That consumers have relationships with brands is established (Fournier 1998) as are consumers' emotional attachments to brands (MacInnis & Park 2005, Bowlby 1980, Hazan & Shaver 1994).

The tendency of people to anthropomorphize (Brown 1991), think about brands as if they were human (Levy 1985), and assign personality qualities to brands objects (Aaker 1997) is also established. Brands and branded products can be symbolic representations of status (James 1890, Belk 1988) and associated social value (Bernheim 1994). In order for ads to be credible sources of information – that is, in order for ads to be fitness indicators – the ad must authentically represent the quality of the advertiser. The usefulness of fitness indicators lies in the quality of information honestly reflecting the signal source (Miller 2000, Guilford & Dawkins 1995, Zahavi 1987). It is expected that ads perceived as authentic representations of attractive advertisers will be associated with higher Advertiser Fitness.

H3a: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Honesty and consumer opinion of the advertiser, perceived authenticity, perceived truthfulness or representation, and perceived honesty.

H3b: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Honesty and Advertiser Fitness.

Behavioral ecology suggests that in order for a consumer to take note of advertisers' signals, the signal must have some specificity to the receiver (Johnstone 1997, Fleishchman 1992). Consumer researchers have established that consumers choose brands that allow self expression (Belk 1988, Malhotra 1988, Kleine et al 1993), and that self-identification with a brand results in conversation about the brand and brand loyalty (Kim et al 2001), self-verification or self-enhancement (Escalas & Bettman 2003), and perceptions that a brand is cool make its advertising more persuasive (Drolet & Aaker 2002). It is expected that when consumers perceive a brand's traits to be commensurate with their self-perceptions or personal goals, there will be positive association with Advertiser Fitness.

H4a: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Self-Relevance and perceived self-relatedness, advertiser understanding of the consumer, advertiser behavior, and advertiser values.

H4b: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Self-Relevance and Advertiser Fitness.

Advertiser Fitness describes a construct that amounts to shorthand for how attractive a brand may be. Attractiveness is a social construction, and when a brand is attractive, hip, and cool, people are more likely to talk about its' ads (Drolet & Aaker 2002). Similarly, self-identification with a brand through brand personality attractiveness results in conversation about the brand and brand loyalty (Kim et al 2001).

H5a: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Potential Word of Mouth and ad memorability, perceived coolness, and predicted buzz.

H5b: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Potential Word of Mouth and Advertiser Fitness.

To validate the concept of Advertiser Fitness and render use of the scale meaningful for practitioners and researchers, it is important to compare the Advertiser Fitness correlations to traditional measures of advertising effectiveness. The traditional measures of Attitude Toward the Ad, Attitude

Toward the Brand, and Purchase Intention will therefore also be included for comparison. It is expected that for each of these traditional measures of advertising effectiveness, there will be statistically significant positive associations with Advertiser Fitness.

H6: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness and Attitude Toward the Ad

H7: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness and Attitude Toward the Brand

H8: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness and Purchase Intent.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND MEASUREMENTS

The hypotheses proposed were tested in a two phase correlational study. The primary objective of this study was to investigate how the creative and perceived cost of advertising signals, constructed as Advertiser Fitness, relate to more traditional measures of advertising.

4.01 DEFINITIONS

Advertiser Fitness is defined as an advertiser's ability to propagate itself as a dominant force in its category as measured by consumer perception of creative or production dominance. It describes the capability of an advertiser to spread its brand through consumer perception of creative intelligence and costly display as an honest handicap. *Fitness Indicators* are those qualities and characteristics perceived and used by consumers to guarantee the verity of advertisers' claims to quality brands and market strength (Zahavi 1977, Miller 2000). *Creativity* is defined as consumers' perceptions of creative quality based

on dimensions of innovation, appropriateness, intelligence, entertainment, and quality of production (Miller 2000, Till & Baack, Milgrom & Roberts 1986).

4.02 SURVEY 1: ADVERTISER FITNESS

The purpose of this study was to generate consumer scores for a variety of TV spots reflecting judgments on items relating to creativity, cost of production, and celebrity. Data on creativity concepts and production cost concepts were obtained from student and non-student subjects using an online interactive survey.

Contrast effects are tendencies for judgments along a stimulus dimension (such as weight or temperature). An example of a contrast effect is that exposure to hot water followed by tepid water creates an impression that the tepid water is “cold” given the contrast with the preceding exposure to hot water. Contrast effects have been documented for social judgment domains as well as physical property domains. An example of a contrast effect in social judgment is when subjects judge average-looking individuals less attractive after exposure to more physically attractive individuals such as beautiful models or magazine centerfolds (Kenrick & Gutierrez 1980; Kenrick, Gutierrez & Goldberg 1989). To control for contrast effects, subjects were exposed to spots in a completely randomized order.

This survey involved 194 respondents age 18-54. Of these, 90 were male and 104 were female. Spots to be evaluated were drawn from two product categories: auto insurance (Table 4.1) and cell phone services (Table 4.2). These two product categories are consumed by most people in the United States, with all drivers required by law to purchase auto insurance, and 70 percent of the United States population now owns cell phones according to the International Association for the Wireless Telecommunications Industry (CTIA). Of the more than 233 million cell phone users in the U.S., over 55 percent are age 18-29 (CTIA Semi-Annual Report). Both product categories, then, represent intangible services associated with highly consumed, personally symbolic physical goods, rendering them familiar to most consumers. These product categories are also fairly competitive and rank highly among consumer advertising categories, a condition that yielded a high variety of TV spots available for study. Use of two product categories in this research also allows elimination of differences due to category characteristics.

A total of 32 spots in these two product categories were evaluated with each respondent viewing and responding to six randomly selected spots in random order from the total pool of 32 spots for a total of 1065 evaluations. Eighteen of the 32 spots evaluated were for auto insurance brands. Fourteen of the 32 spots evaluated were for brands of cell phone services. For the purposes

of this study, it is assumed that each individual's responses to the ad stimuli are independent of each other and independent of the responses of other subjects.

The eight measures of creativity were *appropriateness of ad concept, relevance, novelty, self-relevance, coolness, entertaining, tone, intelligence, and information utility*.. The three measures of production quality were *perceived level of production quality, perceived quality of special effects, special effects impression, and perceived attractiveness of actors*. In addition, questions were asked to score consumer perceptions of *brand familiarity, attitude toward the ad, and attitude toward the brand*.

Table 4.1. Auto Insurance Brand Spots in Survey 1

Auto Ins. Brand	Ad Name	Ad Description
Geico	<i>French Interpreter</i>	Insurance language is Greek to me
Geico	<i>Neanderthal at Airport</i>	Even a caveman can understand Geico
Geico	<i>Neanderthal Apology</i>	Apologizing to cavemen for suggesting ignorance
Geico	<i>Neanderthal Insult</i>	More cavemen are victims of prejudice
Geico	<i>Gecko -Eyeball Trick</i>	Gecko spokes-lizard with eyeball-licking minion
21 st Century	<i>Italian Job</i>	Take-off on Italian Job movie with art heist
21 st Century	<i>Speed</i>	Take-off on Speed movie
State Farm	<i>A/C</i>	Driver gets hot while waiting for assistance
State Farm	<i>Roadhouse Blues</i>	Driver gets stuck in the rain
AllState	<i>Secret Shortcut</i>	Secret shortcuts have unexpected adventures
AllState	<i>Girls' Day Out</i>	Ladies have embarrassing wreck while fantasizing about NASCAR hottie
AllState	<i>Get Onboard</i>	Driver misses bridge
AllState	<i>New Car</i>	Accidents happen quick
Nationwide	<i>Rocket Luge</i>	Life comes at you fast with Evel-Kneival type stunt
Nationwide	<i>Lightswitch</i>	Crossed wires for garage doors in different houses
Nationwide	<i>Pool</i>	Life comes at you fast in the swimming pool
Mercury	<i>Captured</i>	Agents are not from the planet Mercury
Mercury	<i>Interview</i>	Agents are not from the planet Mercury redux

Table 4.2 Cell Phone Service Brand Spots in Survey 1

Cell Phone Service Brand	Ad Name	Ad Description
Sprint	<i>Minutes</i>	Flat rate minute plan
Sprint	<i>Clones</i>	People are not all alike
Virgin Mobile	<i>Shane</i>	Mime uses text messaging
Virgin Mobile	<i>Mime March</i>	Many mimes use text messaging
Pocket Limo	<i>Monkey around</i>	Monkey in limosine causes wreck
Motorola	<i>Phone Booth</i>	Phone booth stuffing with numerous rock stars
T-Mobile	<i>Free-Roader</i>	Promotional offer
T-Mobile	<i>Mixit</i>	Promotional offer
Telstra	<i>Tommy Lee</i>	Rock Stars get everything they want
Telstra	<i>Collie</i>	Movie Stars get everything they want even if they're dogs
Verizon	<i>Ferret</i>	Ferret gets mans tongue, man uses text messaging
Verizon	<i>Urgent</i>	Text messaging when you can't talk
Vodafone	<i>Unplugged</i>	Land line goes where you go
Vodafone	<i>Who Are You?</i>	Personalize your phone

4.03 SURVEY 2: AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS OF TV ADVERTISERS

The purpose of this study was to generate traditional advertising research consumer responses to the selected high score, medium score, and low score spots resulting from Survey 1 to determine whether the Advertiser Fitness construct is a valid measure of consumer intent to buy. Data on ad perceptions,

attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intent were obtained from student and non-student subjects using an online, interactive survey.

This survey involved 421 respondents age 18-54. Of these, 156 were male and 265 were female. Spots to be evaluated were drawn from those evaluated in Survey 1, in two product categories: cell phone services and auto insurance. A total of six spots in these two product categories were evaluated, three in each category corresponding to a high score, a medium score, and a low score (Table 4.3). Each respondent viewed and responded to all six spots presented in random order for a total of 2085 evaluations. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that individual's responses to the ad stimuli are independent of each other and independent of the responses of other subjects. Under this assumption, the number of evaluations is taken as n .

Traditional measures of Attitude Toward the Ad included *boring, fun, clever, amusing, enthusiasm, attention, and excitement*. Traditional measures of Attitude Toward the Brand included perceptions of *whether the brand was good or bad, whether the advertiser is pleasant or unpleasant, and whether the quality of the product or service is good or bad*. In addition, questions were asked about the advertiser's *honesty, category leadership, relation to consumer, influentiality, the advertiser's perceived status, the advertiser as a personality, the advertiser's environmental correctness, and the advertiser's perceived reputation*. The

traditional measure of purchase intent, *likeliness of purchase*, was included. Further exploration of perceptions included a measure of *ad creativity*, *understanding the consumer*, *authenticity*, *truthfulness*, *memorability*, *distinctiveness*, and *buzz factor*.

Table 4.3. Spots Included in Survey 2

Cell Phone Service Brand	Ad Name	Ad Description
Sprint	<i>Clones</i>	People are not all alike
Motorola	<i>Phone Booth</i>	Phone booth stuffing with numerous rock stars
Telstra	<i>Tommy Lee</i>	Rock Stars get everything they want
Auto Insurance Service Brand	Ad Name	Ad Description
Geico	<i>French Interpreter</i>	Insurance language is Greek to me
Mercury	<i>Interview</i>	Mercury Insurance agents are not from the planet Mercury
AllState	<i>Secret Shortcut</i>	Secret shortcuts have unexpected adventures

4.04 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection employed two methods of solicitation for respondents. The first survey was posted on the University of Texas Advertising Participant Pool website, a research tool that utilizes the large student population at the University of Texas. Participating instructors inform students of studies posted on the Participant Pool website, and give nominal extra credit points for

completing surveys. The Participant Pool administrator provides a receipt page at the end of each completed survey for the student to print and turn in to the instructor. The receipt page fields are also collected into a database which is provided to the researcher at the end of the study, and each researcher then provides student lists to participating instructors as a backup for credit documentation.

In previous semesters, researcher use of the participant pool has been limited to fewer than ten studies per semester allowing each researcher ample responding subjects. However, during the semester this research study was posted on the Participant Pool website, there were an unusually large number of studies posted. As a consequence, it was more difficult to get student respondents to participate in this study.

When it became apparent that data collection was not proceeding as expected, additional respondent solicitations were employed. To increase interest in responding to the survey for this research, participating instructors were solicited to announce that there would be a random drawing for \$100 to be awarded to one respondent who completed the survey. In addition, email solicitations were used to recruit an older, professional demographic.

For students participating through the UT Advertising Participant Pool, respondents opted to participate in studies according to their choice. At one

point, students could choose from up to 36 studies posted for student participation. Once a student selected this study, they clicked through to a description page followed by a page detailing the particulars of informed consent. Once they indicated informed consent by clicking to the next page, they were provided instructions on how to take the survey. Each participant provided age and gender, and indicated which product they use in each of two product categories: cell phone services and auto insurance.

The next step was viewing a TV spot and responding to a series of questions regarding respondent's perceptions of that spot. Each respondent was presented with a total of six spots, in random order to avoid sequence effects. For Survey 1, perceptions of the TV spot were collected using the items developed from the theoretical construction of Advertiser Fitness: *creativity (concept, appropriateness of idea, appropriateness of presentation)*, *novelty (coolness)*, *relevance (fitting personal views)*, *intelligence*, *perceived cost of production*, *perceived quality of production*, *attractiveness of actors*, and *utility of information*. In addition, respondents were asked to report an overall quality of *feeling for the advertiser* and an overall quality of *feeling for the product*. These two measures were later considered in correlation to the more traditional advertising research constructs of *Attitude toward the Brand*.

A high number of spots (32) was included in this survey to control for specific content and previous exposure effects of individual spots (Till, 2006). Non-student respondents clicked on the emailed link to the survey and bypassed the Participant Pool page, going directly to the survey description page. The total number of participants who completed online Survey 1 was one hundred ninety-four. Since each participant responded to six ads, a total of 1164 individual spot measures were recorded. Of those, 99 incomplete cases were discarded, resulting in a total of 1065 cases ($n = 1065$).

The Advertiser Fitness scores derived from the results of this survey were calculated initially by summing the scores across all spot perception items. The resulting scores ranged from 1641 to 2411 for the *Auto Insurance Service Brand* category, and from 1710 to 2634 for the *Cell Phone Service Brand* category. From those scores, three spots were selected in each category to represent a high Advertiser Fitness score, a medium Advertiser Fitness score, and a low Advertiser Fitness Score. Those six spots were ported into Survey 2 (Table 4.3).

Given the challenges of collecting data through the UT Advertising Participant Pool as experienced in Survey 1, a slightly different approach was used to solicit responses to Survey 2. Instructors whose classes participated in the Participant Pool surveys were solicited directly to forward a solicitation email to their students, advertising a chance to win \$100 by doing the survey. One

instructor offered students additional extra credit if they did the survey, to be documented by a receipt page and receipt database similar to the Participant Pool respondent database, only administered by the researcher. An additional request for participation was emailed to instructors known to the researcher who taught at other universities. Finally, the email solicitation was sent to an extensive email address list.

Survey 2 utilized only the six spots selected from the Advertiser Fitness scores developed in Survey 1 as previously described. Survey 2 followed the same format as Survey 1, with a description page followed by details and disclaimers for informed consent, followed by instructions and then the randomly presented series of TV spots. Each respondent saw all six spots. At the end of the survey, respondents could provide name and course information for course credit and enter the random drawing for \$100 cash prize.

In Survey 2, participants provided perceptions regarding conscious evaluations of advertiser credibility, relevance, and honesty. In addition, they responded to traditional measures of advertising research, including *Attitude Toward the Brand in the Ad* (Gardner 1985; Mitchell 1986), *Attitude Toward the Ad* (Stout and Rust 1993); *Attitude Toward the Company in the Ad* (Peterson et al 1992), and *Purchase Intention*.

The total number of participants who successfully completed online Survey 2 was four hundred twenty-one. Since each participant responded to up to six ads, a total of 2085 individual spot cases were completed and recorded (n = 2085).

Participants' perceptions of the TV Advertiser were measured by using a 7-point semantic differential scale. Advertiser Fitness was operationalized as the *mean regression factor score* for each spot (see Appendix Table 6).

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.01 ADVERTISER FITNESS

The survey results collected through the online surveys were analyzed via a series of SPSS statistical analyses. The Advertiser Fitness construct was analyzed using two methods: bivariate correlation and factor analysis. Initial bivariate correlational analysis confirmed the inter-relationships of all the items on the Advertiser Fitness survey (Table 5.1a-c).

Table 5.1a. Correlation Matrix: Advertiser Fitness

	<i>Concept</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Novelty</i>	<i>Self-Fit</i>	<i>Coolness</i>	<i>Entertaining</i>
<i>Concept</i>						
<i>Relevance</i>	.64**					
<i>Novelty</i>	.17**	.18**				
<i>Self-Fit</i>	.75**	.69**	.19**			
<i>Coolness</i>	.50**	.46**	.36**	.54**		
<i>Entertaining</i>	.59**	.51**	.33**	.62**	.67**	
<i>Tone</i>	.71**	.58**	.21**	.73**	.56**	.71**
<i>Intelligence</i>	.62**	.63**	.31**	.67**	.66**	.71**
<i>Production Quality</i>	.50**	.44**	.25**	.53**	.55**	.58**
<i>SFX Quality</i>	.34**	.35**	.20**	.42**	.45**	.49**
<i>SFX Impression</i>	.42**	.38**	.21**	.47**	.48**	.52**
<i>Att Toward Ad</i>	.68**	.62**	.29**	.72**	.67**	.78**
<i>Att Toward Brand</i>	.58**	.56**	.22**	.65**	.54**	.64**
<i>Familiarity</i>	.29**	.32**	.12**	.35**	.26**	.33**
<i>Attractiveness</i>	.37**	.39**	.14**	.35**	.32**	.36**
<i>Information</i>	.65**	.63**	.21**	.69**	.53**	.56**

$n_{\text{obs}} = 1065$; ** $p < .00$

Table 5.1b. Correlation Matrix: Advertiser Fitness

	<i>Tone</i>	<i>Intelligence</i>	<i>Prod Quality</i>	<i>SFXQual</i>	<i>SFXImpress</i>
<i>Intelligence</i>	.68**				
<i>Production Quality</i>	.57**	.64**			
<i>SFX Quality</i>	.46**	.47**	.62**		
<i>SFX Impression</i>	.50**	.51**	.56**	.82**	
<i>Att Toward Ad</i>	.74**	.81**	.66**	.50**	.55**
<i>Att Toward Brand</i>	.63**	.63**	.58**	.43**	.46**
<i>Familiarity</i>	.28**	.31**	.31**	.24**	.22**
<i>Attractiveness</i>	.37**	.40**	.38**	.35**	.36**
<i>Information</i>	.63**	.65**	.53**	.41**	.44**

$n_{\text{obs}} = 1065$; ** $p < .00$

Table 5.1c. Correlation Matrix: Advertiser Fitness

	<i>Att. Ad</i>	<i>Att. Brand</i>	<i>Familiarity</i>	<i>Attractive Actors</i>
<i>Att Toward Brand</i>	.73**			
<i>Familiarity</i>	.36**	.46**		
<i>Attractiveness</i>	.42**	.38**	.15**	
<i>Information</i>	.69**	.66**	.40**	.38**

$n_{\text{obs}} = 1065$; ** $p < .00$

With regard to the covariates, all items correlated at a statistically significant level within $p < .00$, but three items (*Novelty*, *Familiarity*, and *Attractiveness*) correlated at lower levels. Nevertheless, these results taken together indicate a high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$) within the Advertiser Fitness construct that suggests participants' perceptions of the ads is definitely related to dimensions of creativity and cost.

Further confirmation of the Advertiser Fitness construct was produced via factor analysis of the results from Survey 1: Advertiser Fitness. A single factor solution was strongly suggested by results showing only two factors with

eigenvalues greater than 1 (8.59, 1.26). The factor loadings contribute to understanding how each of the variables contributes to the general Advertiser Fitness construct. Loadings lower than .40 suggest non-inclusion with the factor. The three items that stood out in the correlational analysis above, *Novelty*, *Familiarity*, and *Attractiveness* were shown to have low levels of common variance and low factor loading values and were subsequently dropped from the Advertiser Fitness score. The resulting thirteen items in the Advertiser Fitness construct all showed factor loadings greater than .60 (Table 5.2). The single factor solution to this analysis confirms that Advertiser Fitness is a single construct. The single factor that was retained accounted for 53.66 percent of the total variance as seen in Figure 5.1. Cronbach's Alpha was then determined to be .95 for the resulting thirteen items, reflecting a very strong internal consistency for these data.

To relate Advertiser Fitness to the results of the second survey, an Advertiser Fitness score was calculated using the mean regression factor score for each observation of the thirty-two TV spots included in Survey 1 (Table 5.2). All items with mean regression factor scores below .5 were discarded. Using this score, each time a person rates a TV spot, their response can be summarized in terms of Advertiser Fitness with a single score that is based on the factor solution for Advertiser Fitness.

Table 5.2. Advertiser Fitness Factor Matrix

	Factor: Advertiser Fitness
<i>Concept</i>	.765
<i>Relevance</i>	.708
<i>Novelty</i>	.314
<i>Self-Fit</i>	.816
<i>Coolness</i>	.719
<i>Entertaining</i>	.810
<i>Tone</i>	.817
<i>Intelligence</i>	.844
<i>Production Quality</i>	.732
<i>Special FX Quality</i>	.614
<i>Special FX Impression</i>	.649
<i>Attitude Toward Ad</i>	.902
<i>Attitude Toward Brand</i>	.781
<i>Familiarity of Product</i>	.413
<i>Attractiveness of Actors</i>	.481
<i>Utility of Information</i>	.777

$n_{\text{obs}} = 1065$

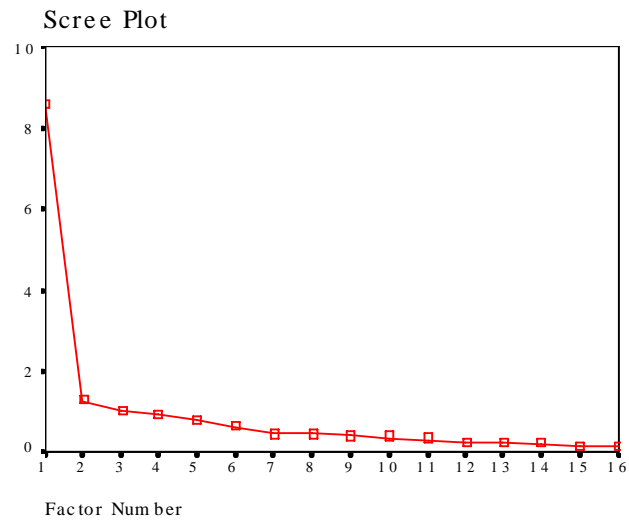


Figure 5.1. Factor Analysis Variance Explained

Spots included in the study were presented in random order to avoid contrast effects, and the spots were numbered with no regard for product category. A summary of all spots scored is shown in Table 5.3. Because of the random nature of the spot selection, the number of observations (n) is not identical between spots.

Advertiser Fitness scores for all thirty-two spots included in Survey 1 were then grouped into separate categories for *Auto Insurance Service Brands* and *Cell Phone Service Brands* and ranked according to Advertiser Fitness score. Three spots were selected for each product category representing high, medium, and low score conditions. In the Auto Insurance Service Brands category, a Geico spot (AF = -.80), a Mercury Insurance spot (AF = -.40), and an AllState spot (AF = .57) were selected, representing a low score, a medium score, and a high score, respectively. In the Cell Phone Service Brands category, a Telstra spot (AF = -.39), a Sprint spot (AF = -.03), and a Motorola spot (AF = .68) were selected, representing a low score, a medium score, and a high score, respectively. These six spots were imported into the data set for Survey 2: Audience Perceptions of TV Advertisers.

Correlation analysis confirmed the validity of the Advertiser Fitness construct with all items on the survey ($p < .00$). Table 5-3 shows the validity coefficients for each item to the Advertiser Fitness score. As expected, the Advertiser Fitness score is significantly correlated with perceptions of advertiser honesty, Attitude toward the Ad, Attitude toward the Brand and Purchase Intention.

Table 5.3. Advertiser Fitness: Case Summaries

Spot	Mean (AF Score)	n	SE	Min	Max	SD
1	-.31	33	.19	-3.0057	1.4277	1.08
2	.57	33	.12	-1.0010	1.6994	.72
3	-.03	32	.17	-2.8452	1.7776	.96
4	.30	34	.13	-1.2455	1.5552	.73
5	.64	33	.12	-1.0043	1.7563	.68
6	-.14	33	.20	-2.7304	1.4277	1.12
7	-.45	33	.18	-2.5907	1.7021	1.05
8	-.23	32	.22	-2.6791	1.6502	1.23
9	-.39	34	.20	-2.6058	1.4142	1.16
10	.16	34	.19	-2.8671	1.4517	1.13
11	.78	32	.14	-1.459	1.7776	.79
12	-.37	33	.15	-1.9109	1.5024	.86
13	.17	33	.16	-1.4871	1.4926	.92
14	-.46	34	.14	-1.9515	1.1538	.81
15	.24	33	.20	-1.8813	1.7350	1.14
16	-.08	34	.16	-1.7537	1.7776	.90
17	-.30	33	.18	-2.4651	1.6211	1.01
18	-.04	34	.18	-2.4033	1.7776	1.06
19	-.80	34	.13	-2.2158	1.3295	.77
20	.02	31	.14	-2.0250	1.5788	.78
21	.68	35	.15	-2.2522	1.7180	.86
22	.40	33	.13	-1.4249	1.7776	.73
23	-.03	34	.13	-1.2068	1.4929	.77
24	-.16	33	.16	-2.4248	1.4211	.93
25	.11	34	.10	-1.0967	1.2457	.60
26	.37	32	.14	-1.516	1.5258	.79
27	.28	35	.13	-1.3815	1.4204	.75
28	-.03	33	.15	-1.7052	1.7680	.84
29	-.20	33	.16	-2.1254	1.4340	.91
30	-.35	36	.19	-2.4745	1.5972	1.12
31	-.40	33	.17	-1.8058	1.5651	.98
32	.08	32	.13	-1.6712	1.6133	.76
Total	.00	1065	.03	-3.0057	1.7776	.98

To clarify usefulness of the Advertiser Fitness construct across product categories, mean regression factor scores were also correlated with results for both product categories: Auto Insurance and Cell Phone Service. It was expected that

the construct would be valid for both categories. Although correlations showed some interesting differences between them, the bivariate correlations were significant ($p < .00$) for all items and all constructs. It appears that Advertiser Perceived Honesty is more important for the auto insurance category than for the cell phone service category, and that Word of Mouth factors are more important for cell phone services than for auto insurance. This highlights the social aspect of cell phone consumption as compared to auto insurance.

Some items that were significantly correlated to Advertiser Fitness were deemed to have validity coefficients too low for inclusion in the Advertiser Fitness construct nevertheless. Environmental Correctness was found to be significantly correlated to Advertiser Fitness ($R = .08$) but the low value of r suggests that this correlation is not very important to most ad viewers. Similarly, a low but significant value for Advertiser Untruthfulness ($R = .18$) suggests at least questionability for this item and significance may be a result of the large number of responses. The validity coefficients of the remaining items were all strong and statistically significant at $p < .00$ respective to their product category results as well as to overall results, as shown in Table 5.4.

With respect to the hypotheses guiding this study, items in Survey 2 were considered separately and grouped as scaled constructs of Perceived Honesty, Perceived Status, Self-Relevance, and Potential Word of Mouth.

Table 5.4. Advertiser Fitness Score Correlations

	Overall Advertiser Fitness R	Auto Insurance Category R	Cell Phone Category R
Perceived Honesty	.31*	.34*	.25*
<i>Opinion</i>	.32*	.32*	.28*
<i>Authenticity</i>	.26*	.27*	.20*
<i>Truth</i>	.20*	.30*	.08*
<i>Honesty</i>	.28*	.31*	.24*
Perceived Self-Relevance	.32*	.30*	.28*
<i>Understanding</i>	.32*	.25*	.32*
<i>Self Reflection</i>	.30*	.28*	.27*
<i>Behavior</i>	.23*	.27*	.13*
<i>Values</i>	.26*	.30*	.21*
Word of Mouth	.39*	.29*	.42*
<i>Memorability</i>	.37*	.27*	.40*
<i>Coolness</i>	.43*	.26*	.49*
<i>Buzz</i>	.26*	.22*	.23*
Perceived Status	.39*	.33*	.37*
<i>Influential</i>	.34*	.33*	.31*
<i>Status</i>	.35*	.32*	.33*
<i>Personality</i>	.37*	.34*	.36*
<i>Category Strength</i>	.30*	.29*	.28*
Attitude Toward the Brand	.39*	.35*	.38*
<i>Brand Quality</i>	.35*	.30*	.36*
<i>Brand Pleasantness</i>	.32*	.32*	.31*
<i>Product Quality</i>	.34*	.30*	.35*
<i>Reputation</i>	.29*	.28*	.30*
<i>Customer Service</i>	.29*	.22*	.32*
<i>Approval</i>	.35*	.29*	.35*
Attitude Toward the Ad	.43*	.31*	.48*
<i>Boring (rev code)</i>	.37*	.24*	.44*
<i>Fun</i>	.39*	.27*	.43*
<i>Clever</i>	.40*	.29*	.44*
<i>Amusing</i>	.39*	.27*	.45*
<i>Enthusiasm</i>	.40*	.29*	.44*
<i>Attention</i>	.37*	.31*	.34*
<i>Excitement</i>	.41*	.29*	.45*
<i>Informativeness</i>	.31*	.34*	.23*
Purchase Intent	.32*	.32*	.27*

$n_{\text{obs}} = 2085$; * $p < .00$

5.02 ADVERTISER FITNESS

H1: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness and perceived visual quality, special effects quality, special effects impression, intelligence, appropriateness, concept quality, and entertainment value.

Perceptions regarding perceived cost of production and perceived dimensions of creativity comprise the Advertiser Fitness construct. Respondents were asked questions regarding perception of related items. Cost factors included:

- I thought the ad production was (very poorly done/extremely well done).

(*ProductionQuality*, $R = .75$, $p < .00$)

- With respect to the design quality of special effects in the creation of the ad (digital effects, fantastic creatures, unrealistic events, dream sequences, etc.), I thought the special effects were (very poorly done, very uncool, or very detracting/very well done, very cool, or very effective). (*SFXQuality*, $R = .63$, $p < .00$)

- With respect to the display of special effects in the creation of the ad, I thought the overall use of special effects made (a very negative impression/a very positive impression). (*SFXImpression*, $R = .67$, $p < .00$)

Perceptions of creativity were explored using scale items to measure eight dimensions of creativity (*Concept, Relevance, Self-Fit, Coolness, Entertaining, Tone, Intelligence, and Utility of Information*). Perceived creativity items included:

- The ad concept was (very inappropriate/very appropriate) . (*Concept*, $R = .78$, $p < .00$)
- I found the idea of the ad (irrelevant to my life/relevant to my life). (*Relevance*, $R = .72$, $p < .00$)
- The way this ad represents this product or service fits into my world view (extremely poorly/extremely well). (*Self-Fit*, $R = .83$, $p < .00$)
- I found the ad (extremely offensive/extremely entertaining). (*Entertaining*, $R = .83$, $p < .00$)
- I thought the tone of the ad was (very inappropriate/very appropriate). (*Tone*, $R = .84$, $p < .00$)
- My sense of the ad is that it was (extremely dumb/extremely intelligent). (*Intelligence*, $R = .86$, $p < .00$)
- I feel like this ad conveyed information that is (extremely useless/extremely useful). (*InfoUtil*, $R = .80$, $p < .00$)

Analysis of the scale items for Advertiser Fitness was performed and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .95. These results confirm Hypothesis 1, with strong validation of the Advertiser Fitness construct. Findings confirm there is a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness and perceived visual quality, special effects quality, special effects impression, intelligence, appropriateness, concept quality, tone, self-fit, information utility, and entertainment value.

In addition, advertising media spending was reviewed for the six advertisers whose spots were included in Survey 2. Of the six spots included, AllState had the highest rated spot in the automobile insurance category, and was by far the most media-intensive of all the automobile insurance advertisers considered. Not all of the spots produced for AllState were equally high-ranking in these results, but they were certainly higher than advertisers who did not make the AdAge rankings at all. In the 2005 Advertising Age rankings of the Top 100 advertisers, AllState ranked at number 93 out of all advertisers in all categories, spending \$373.9 million in 2004 across all media, of which \$165 million was broadcast television alone. None of the other advertisers rated in this category during this study were ranked. The insurance category was ranked seventeenth, with \$2.3 billion in domestic spending, but this figure includes all category advertising, not just cars.

In the *AdAge* Top 100 Advertiser rankings for 2004, Telecom was the third highest ranking category in domestic advertising spending with a total of \$9.1 billion combined. Verizon and Sprint were both represented in the rankings at \$2.2 billion and \$1.1 billion, respectively, and ads for both Verizon and Sprint were highly ranked in the current study.

5.03 PERCEIVED STATUS

With regard to perceptions of status, hypotheses were:

H2a: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Status and perceived advertiser influentiaity, attractiveness of personality, status, and category strength.

H2b: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Status and Advertiser Fitness.

One of the predictions of evolutionary biology is that perceived status will influence choosers' choices and increase the attractiveness of higher status choices. To confirm status perception, respondents were asked:

- I think this advertiser is (not very influential/very influential). (*Influence*, $R = .34$, $p < .00$)
- How would you rate this advertiser for social status? (Very low/very high) (*Status*, $R = .35$, $p < .00$)
- If this advertiser were suddenly magically transformed from a large company to an individual, a personality (sort of like a magician turning into a bird or animal), how attractive do you think that magically transformed individual might be? (*Personality*, $R = .37$, $p < .00$)
- How well do you think this advertiser represents category strength and leadership? (*Category Strength*, $R = .30$, $p < .00$)

Perceived Status scores correlated strongly with dimensions of status and attractiveness, as expected. Analysis of Perceived Status items as a scale was performed and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .91. These results confirmed Hypothesis 2a. Findings confirm that there is a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Status and perceived advertiser influentiality, attractiveness of personality, status, and category strength.

Advertiser Fitness was then found to be significantly correlated with Perceived Status ($R = .39$, $p < .00$). Categorical results were similar: Auto Insurance Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Perceived Status ($R =$

.33, $p < .00$); Cell Phone Service Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Perceived Status ($R = .37$, $p < .00$). These categorical and overall results confirm Hypothesis 2b. Findings confirm that there is a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Status and Advertiser Fitness.

5.04 PERCEIVED HONESTY

With regard to perceived honesty, the hypotheses stated:

H3a: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Honesty and consumer opinion of the advertiser, perceived authenticity, perceived truthfulness or representation, and perceived honesty.

H3b: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Honesty and Advertiser Fitness.

Items relating to Advertiser honesty included the following questions:

- After viewing the ad, what is your opinion of this product or service?

(*Opinion*, $R = .32$, $p < .000$)

- Do you believe the ad authentically represented the advertiser's true nature? (*Authenticity*, $R = .26$, $p < .000$)

- My sense of the ad is that it was (extremely untruthful/extremely truthful). (*Truthfulness*, $R = .20$, $p < .000$)
- I feel like this advertiser is (very dishonest/very honest) (*Honesty*, $R = .28$, $p < .000$)

The responses to these questions indicate that perceptions of Advertiser authenticity are key to Perceived Honesty. Analysis of Perceived Honesty items as a coherent scale was performed and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .86. These results confirmed Hypothesis 3a. Findings confirm that there is a statistically significant positive association between the Perceived Honesty construct and consumer opinion of the advertiser, perceived authenticity, perceived truthfulness or representation, and perceived honesty.

Correlation between the Perceived Honesty construct and the Advertiser Fitness score was statistically significant at $R = .31$, $p < .00$. Categorical results were similar: Auto Insurance Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Perceived Honesty ($R = .34$, $p < .00$); Cell Phone Service Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Perceived Honesty ($R = .25$, $p < .00$). These categorical and overall results confirm Hypothesis 3b. Findings confirm that there is a statistically significant positive association between Perceived Honesty and Advertiser Fitness.

5.05 SELF-RELEVANCE

Hypotheses regarding perceived self-relevance were:

H4a: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Self-Relevance and perceived self-relatedness, advertiser understanding of the consumer, advertiser behavior, and advertiser values.

H4b: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Self-Relevance and Advertiser Fitness.

Also considered were questions relating the advertiser and the advertised product to the viewer's selfhood. Questions regarding the relevance of the Brand to the self were:

- How well do you think this advertiser understands your needs and interests with regard to this product or service? (*Understanding*, $R = .319$, $p < .00$)
- The ad represents attitudes or behaviors I would like to have in my life. (*Behavior*, $R = .23$, $p < .00$)
- I thought the ad represented values and morals appropriate for my idea of society and personal behavior. (*Values*, $R = .26$, $p < .00$)

- This ad made me think about my own desire or need for this type of thing in a (negative/positive) way. (*Self Reflection*, $R = .30$, $p < .00$)

These results illuminate the brand's role in relationship to the self and indicate that there is a significant relationship between a person's perception of themselves and their perception of an advertiser as it relates to them. Again, analysis of Perceived Self-Relevance items as a scale was performed and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .87. These results confirmed Hypothesis 4a. Findings confirm that there is a statistically significant positive association between the Self-Relevance construct and perceived self-relatedness, advertiser understanding of the consumer, advertiser behavior, and advertiser values.

Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Self-Relevance at $R = .32$, $p < .00$. Categorical results were similar: Auto Insurance Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Self-Relevance ($R = .30$, $p < .00$); Cell Phone Service Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Self-Relevance ($R = .28$, $p < .00$). These categorical and overall results confirm Hypothesis 4b. Findings confirm that there is a statistically significant positive association between Self-Relevance and Advertiser Fitness.

5.06 POTENTIAL WORD OF MOUTH

H5a: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Potential Word of Mouth and ad memorability, perceived coolness, and predicted buzz.

H5b: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Potential Word of Mouth and Advertiser Fitness.

To explore how Advertiser Fitness relates to word of mouth (WOM), buzz, and talking points, participants were asked:

- How much do you think this ad stands out compared to other ads you've seen? (*Memorability*, $R = .37$, $p < .000$)
- This ad is (boring/cool, distinctive). (*Coolness*, $R = .43$, $p < .000$)
- When hanging out with friends, would this ad be talked about? (socially irrelevant/talked about without a doubt) (*Buzz Factor*, $R = .26$, $p < .000$)

It is interesting that respondents are more likely to think an ad is cool than to admit that they might remember it or discuss it over the water cooler. Analysis of Potential Word of Mouth items as a scale was performed and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .90. These results confirmed Hypothesis 5a. Findings confirm that

there is a statistically significant positive association between the Potential Word of Mouth construct and ad memorability, perceived coolness, and predicted buzz.

Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Potential Word of Mouth at $R = .39$, $p < .00$. Categorical results were similar: Auto Insurance Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Potential Word of Mouth ($R = .29$, $p < .00$); Cell Phone Service Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Potential Word of Mouth ($R = .42$, $p < .00$). These categorical and overall results confirm Hypothesis 5b. Findings confirm that there is a statistically significant positive association between Potential Word of Mouth and Advertiser Fitness.

5.07 TRADITIONAL MEASURES: ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AD

**H6: There will be a statistically significant positive association
between Advertiser Fitness and Attitude Toward the Ad**

Dimensions of Attitude Toward the Ad were similarly probed in Survey 2. Questions relating to Attitude Toward the Ad (Stout & Rust 1993) were presented as 7-point Likert-type queries with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These are the questions relating to Attitude Toward the Ad:

- This ad was dull and boring (*Boring*, $R = -.37$, $p < .00$)
- This ad was fun to watch and to listen to (*Fun*, $R = .39$, $p < .00$)
- This ad is quite clever and entertaining (*Clever*, $R = .40$, $p < .00$)
- This ad is amusing (*Amusing*, $R = .39$, $p < .00$)
- The enthusiasm of the ad is catching – it picks me up (*Enthusiasm*, $R = .40$, $p < .00$)
- The characters or people in the ad captured my attention (*Attention*, $R = .37$, $p < .00$)
- This ad is exciting (*Exciting*, $R = .32$, $p < .00$)
- How useful was the information in the ad to you? (*Info*, $R = .31$, $p < .00$)

These results confirm Hypothesis 6 with a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness scores and the traditional advertising research construct of Attitude Toward the Ad (A_{ad}). Analysis of A_{ad} items as a scale was performed and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .95. Advertiser Fitness

was significantly correlated with Attitude Toward the Ad at $R = .44, p < .00$. Categorical results were similar: Auto Insurance Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Attitude Toward the Ad ($R = .31, p < .00$); Cell Phone Service Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Attitude Toward the Ad ($R = .48, p < .00$).

5.08 TRADITIONAL MEASURES: ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BRAND

Advertiser Fitness is associated with traditional measures of ad effectiveness as well.

H7: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness and Attitude Toward the Brand

The construct of *Attitude Toward the Brand* (Biehal, Stephens, and Curlo 1992; Peterson, Wilson and Brown 1992) can be measured by asking:

- Based on this ad, my approval rating for this brand is (very low/very high) (*Approval*, $R = .26, p < .000$)

- I believe this advertiser's reputation is (very bad/very good) (*Reputation*, $R = .29, p < .000$)
- In my opinion, this advertiser is (very bad/very good) (*Brand Quality*, $R = .35, p < .000$)
- My sense of the advertiser is (very unpleasant/very pleasant) (*Brand Pleasantness*, $R = .32, p < .000$)
- My idea of the product or service in the ad is (very poor quality/extremely good quality) (*Product Quality*, $R = .34, p < .000$)
- I believe this advertiser is (totally not customer service oriented/extremely customer service oriented) (*Customer Service*, $R = .29, p < .00$)

As expected, a statistically significant positive association was found between Attitude Toward the Brand (A_{Brand}) and Advertiser Fitness, confirming Hypothesis 7. Analysis of A_{Brand} items as a scale was performed and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .96. Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Attitude Toward the Brand at $R = .38, p < .00$. Categorical results were similar: Auto Insurance Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Attitude Toward the Brand ($R = .35, p < .00$); Cell Phone Service Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Attitude Toward the Ad ($R = .38, p < .00$).

5.09 TRADITIONAL MEASURES: PURCHASE INTENTION

H8: There will be a statistically significant positive association between Advertiser Fitness and Purchase Intent.

To estimate purchase intention after viewing each ad, respondents were asked:

- Based on this ad, I would be (extremely unlikely/extremely likely) to purchase this product. (*Purchase Intent*, $R = .32$, $p < .00$)

As expected, a statistically significant positive association was found between Purchase Intent and Advertiser Fitness, confirming Hypothesis 8. Results between product categories were similar: Auto Insurance Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Purchase Intent ($R = .32$, $p < .00$); Cell Phone Service Advertiser Fitness was significantly correlated with Purchase Intent ($R = .27$, $p < .00$). With these results, it is clearly demonstrated that purchase intention can be predicted by Advertiser Fitness scores, using perceptions of creativity and cost of production as the key dimensions of customer evaluation.

To summarize, the construct of Advertiser Fitness is comprised of perceptions of Creativity, Honesty, Self-Relevance, Status, and Potential Word of Mouth. All of these dimensions of Advertiser Fitness are validated through correlation analysis within and between product categories as shown in Table 5.5. Graphic representation of the described interrelationships between Advertiser Fitness dimensions is shown in Figure 5.2.

Table 5.5. Correlation Matrix: Advertiser Fitness Concepts

	ADVERTISER FITNESS	AF AUTO INSURANCE	AF CELL PHONE SERVICE
<i>Perceived Honesty</i>	.31**	.34*	.25*
<i>Self-Relevance</i>	.32**	.30*	.28*
<i>Perceived Status</i>	.39**	.33*	.37*
<i>Word of Mouth</i>	.39**	.29*	.42*
<i>Att Ad</i>	.43**	.31*	.48*
<i>Att Brand</i>	.38**	.35*	.38*
<i>Purchase Intent</i>	.32**	.32*	.27*

$n_{\text{obs}} = 2085$; ** $P < .00$

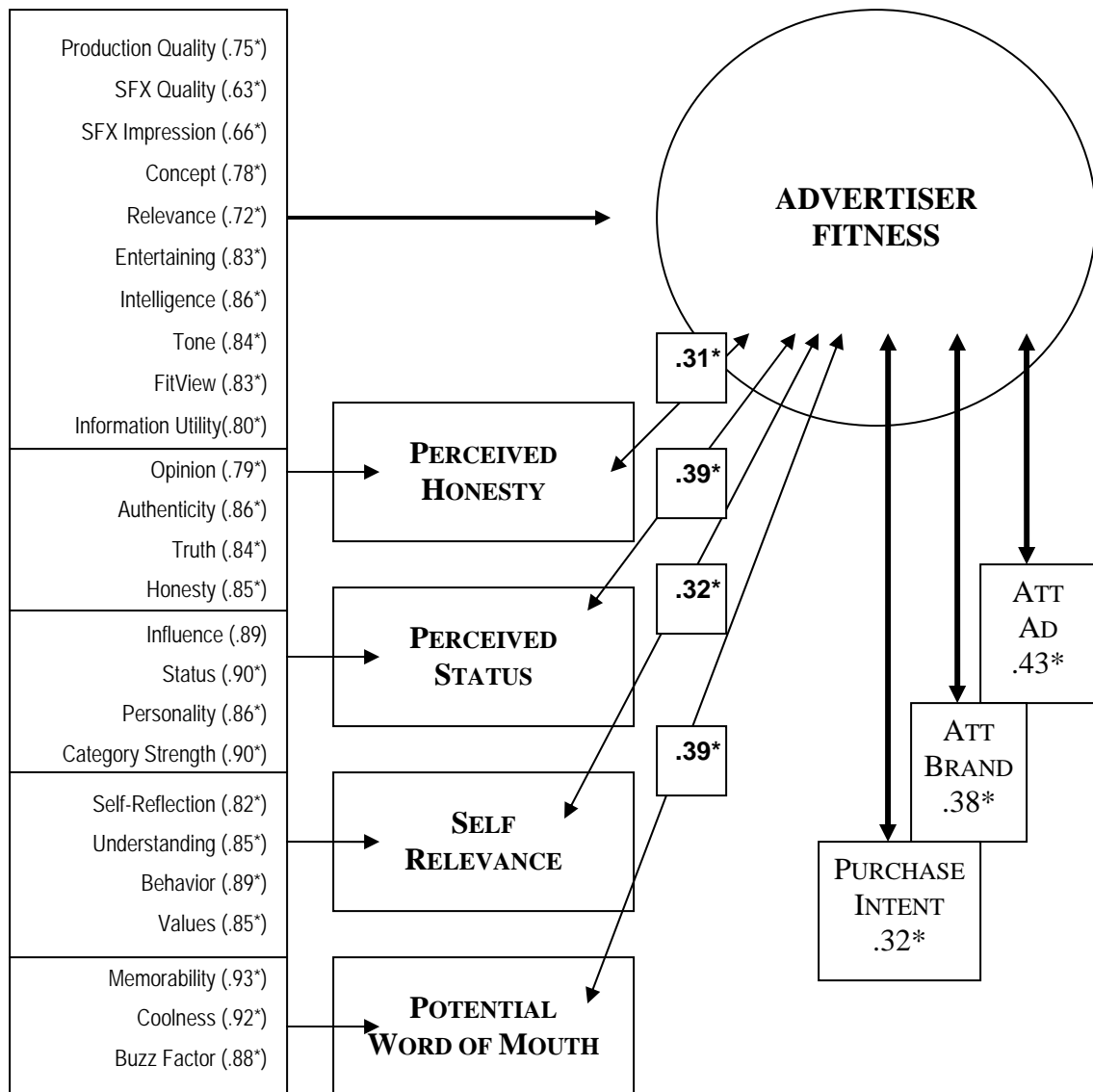


Figure 5.2 Advertiser Fitness is comprised of perceptions of perceived cost factors and perceived creativity factors. Advertiser Fitness is closely related to Perceived Credibility (Opinion, Authenticity, Truth, Honesty); Perceived Status (Influence, Status, Attractiveness of Brand Personality, Category Strength); Self-Relevance (Self-Reflection, Advertiser Understanding of Consumer, Advertiser Behavior, Advertiser Values); and Potential Word of Mouth (Memorability, Coolness, Buzz Factor). Correlation coefficients are shown for related constructs and for Advertiser Fitness. Advertiser Fitness correlation coefficients are lower due to the small set of items, discretely measured. *All correlations are significant ($p < .00$).

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that consumers' perceptions of advertisers are associated with dimensions of creativity, credibility, and status. Previous studies have focused on affective responses to ads without attempting to draw connections to creative elements. This study shows that perceptions of creativity are related to traditional measures of advertising effectiveness.

The construct of Advertiser Fitness has been validated and shown to be positively associated with traditional measures of advertising, including Attitude toward the Ad, Attitude toward the Brand, and Purchase Intent. In addition, Advertiser Fitness is positively associated with constructs of perceived advertiser credibility, perceived status, and perceived creativity. Further deconstruction of the overall Advertiser Fitness results into categorical results for the categories of Auto Insurance services and Cell Phone services highlights similarities in consumer perceptions of importance, and confirms the usefulness of the Advertiser Fitness construct across categories of consumer services. These results portend a potentially robust body of future investigation for categories of

consumer goods and services, different categories of persuasive signaling, and further illuminate dimensions of consumer affect.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that perceived qualities associated with cost and creativity comprised the Advertiser Fitness construct. The dimensions of Advertiser Fitness measured were visual quality, special effects, concept, appropriateness, intelligence, tone, entertainment, information utility, relevance, and fit with self-view. This investigation confirmed these dimensions Advertiser Fitness, implying that an individual's impression of production cost and creative quality can be associated with intention to purchase. Employment of known celebrities seems to enhance perception of cost, as seen in the Motorola Phone Booth ad, which featured so many rock musicians that most people would be at a loss to name them all: Madonna, Iggy Pop, and Biggie Smalls are a few of the famous names. The 'Phone Booth' (AF score= .68) ad was rated highest on the Advertiser Fitness scale, by far outpacing another high-ranking spot, AllState's 'Girls' Day Out,' (AF score = .24) which only featured a handful of NASCAR celebrity drivers.

Hypotheses 2a proposed that consumers would associate higher perceived advertiser influentiaity, attractiveness of personality, status, and category strength with higher Perceived Status (construct) due to beliefs about the advertiser with increased advertiser fitness. Results showed that when consumers

believe the advertiser is a category leader, is influential, has high status, and would be prestigious to hang out with if they were a personality, they rank that advertiser higher in Advertiser Fitness. Perceived status appears to be more important for cell phone service than for auto insurance, and this is perhaps due to the more social aspect of cell phone consumption. Since cell phones are increasingly integral to the life and social networks of people, and brand personalities are more salient under social conditions, it is natural to find status more important in the more socially relevant category. Hypothesis 2b was also confirmed: the Perceived Status construct is statistically significant positive association with Advertiser Fitness.

Hypothesis 3a proposed that there would be a positive association between Perceived Honesty and consumer opinion of the advertiser, perceived authenticity, perceived truthfulness or representation, and perceived honesty. Results confirm this association. This concept is a direct reflection of the idea that a peacock cannot fake a good quality display of his spectacular tail. It is by design an honest reflection of his genetic quality. If he produces a robust, colorful, long, and dense plumage that shows off to spectacular effect, there is no doubt that he has the genetic makeup that promotes quality production. The quality of the tail is a guarantee of the quality of the genes and there is no way to fake it. By the same token, consumers can deduce whether an advertiser is

honest by making assumptions about ads. These results also show that when Perceived Honesty is high, consumers will rank the advertiser higher in Advertiser Fitness, confirming Hypothesis 3b.

Comparing results between product categories, results for this item are interesting in that Perceived Honesty is correlated higher with auto insurance advertiser than with cell phones. Insurance is a less socially relevant service but a more financially relevant one. It appears that consumers are more interested in honesty from their insurers than they are from their cell phone providers, for whom the consequence of poor service or shifting service providers is potentially less costly than for auto insurance.

Hypothesis 4a proposed that there would be a statistically significant positive association between the Self-Relevance construct and perceived self-relatedness, advertiser understanding of the consumer, advertiser behavior, and advertiser values. Self-relevance is also a key dimension of perceptions of creativity, so it is to be expected that there will be significant correlation in this area. The results confirm Hypothesis 4a and further show a statistically significant positive correlation between Self-Relevance and Advertiser Fitness, confirming Hypothesis 4b. Comparison across categories of advertisers shows very similar correlation between Advertiser Fitness and Self-Relevance. This finding suggests that, as with bird signals in the forest and frog signals in

overlapping territories, consumers are more likely to have positive associations with advertisers who clearly understand and speak specifically to their life situations. If advertisers can refine understanding of core markets and increase strategic specificity, the resulting narrowing of signaling could reduce media clutter, improve environmental quality overall, and reduce advertising costs while improving customer relations.

Hypothesis 5a proposed that there will be a statistically significant positive association between Potential Word of Mouth and ad memorability, perceived coolness, and predicted buzz. Results confirmed this hypothesis as well. Respondents agreed that they would be more likely to remember and talk about ads they thought were cool, innovative, self-relevant, and creative. While categorical results were positive for both auto insurance and cell phone services, the nature of the cell phone category seems to inspire a likelihood of greater buzz. This finding is consistent with the higher perceived creativity within the cell phone category, suggesting again that more creative spots are better indicators of advertiser robustness and quality. Results also confirmed Hypothesis 5b by establishing a statistically significant positive association between Potential Word of Mouth and Advertiser Fitness.

Hypotheses 6 through 8 proposed that Advertiser Fitness would be positively associated with Attitude Toward the Ad, Attitude Toward the Brand,

and Purchase Intention, respectively. All three of these traditional measures of advertising effectiveness correlated significantly with Advertiser Fitness, in both product categories and overall. This is an important outcome for this study because it shows that breaking down the classic constructs in Advertising into evolutionarily predicted components is logical and is empirically validated for the context of this study.

The dimensions of Advertiser Fitness are not fundamentally different from the dimensions of Attitude Toward the Ad and Attitude Toward the Brand. They are highly correlated with each other, indicating they are very closely related. However, the components of Advertiser Fitness are developed along the lines predicted by evolutionary biology and have been demonstrated to be consistent with vertebrate animal behaviors that are believed to be much older in geological time than human cognition. The advertising research canon is largely based on assumptions regarding the rationality of man, his ability to rely on cognition to make decisions, and the cognitive aspects of persuasion. This research gives a new perspective on the non-cognitive aspects of choosing in response to advertiser signals, suggesting that maybe consumers are not so different from birds and lizards at least part of the time.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.01 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Despite a robust history of delving into personality psychology and models of persuasion, in recent decades advertising research has centered on a few central theories of persuasion. With the advance of new knowledge bases and acquisition techniques in behavioral ecology, neuroscience, and evolutionary psychology, advertising research is now poised to take advantage of previously obscured aspects of persuasion and consumer behavior. The results of this study show that lessons from natural ecosystems and animal populations can be applied to human ecology for useful insights and surprising possibilities.

The most intriguing implications of this study have to do with the illumination that dimensions of affect regarding the signaller, Perceived Honesty and Perceived Status, and dimensions of affect regarding the signal quality itself, conceived here as Advertiser Fitness, are associated with traditional measures of advertising effectiveness including Attitude Toward the Ad, Attitude Toward the Brand, and Purchase Intent. These results align with predictions from behavioral ecology and evolutionary psychology that assume automaticity of mental processes

rather than cognition. For these predictions to hold in these circumstances strongly suggests that people's rationales for why they like something or why they prefer one brand over another may be simply cognitive justifications for an affective perceptions.

One of the important implications of this study is that, through the Advertiser Fitness construct, creativity factors can be associated with purchase intention. Heretofore, creativity has been deemed too subjective to be used in quantitative research, and too fuzzy to be very useful in qualitative studies of advertising. By breaking down creativity into its dimensional components of concept quality, relevance of the idea, fit with self and world view, entertaining, coolness, intelligence, tone, and information utility, the construct of creativity is shown to have interesting potential for quantitative research. Per Kapferer (1992), brand style, the way signals are conveyed in words and pictures, reflects the brand's core identity, which relates creative factors back to brand personality directly. These results suggest that the perception of creative factors is more salient to consumers than self-relevance, but there may be some conflation between perceived creativity and self-relevance, since perceived creativity would naturally be related to the self.

The implications of using creativity in quantitative research represent a double-edged sword. On the one hand, creative professionals may raise a hue and

cry that this represents an attempt to quantify creative elements, thereby destroying the very core of the creative process. On the other hand, the *possibility* of quantifying *perceptions* of creativity as opposed to *actual* creativity, presents a potentially huge improvement in the state of trying to understand the dimensions of an affective response to an ad. The potential for further research in this area is boundless. Other aspects of creativity may be found to contribute important information to Advertiser Fitness, such as sound design, visual effects, and image quality. It will be interesting to explore further into these possibilities.

Advertiser Fitness is constructed from predicted theoretical dimensions of creative perception and cost perception. The well-established idea that price signals quality (for example, Erdem et al 2005, Gerstner 1985) is extended to the perceived cost of advertising production, and perceived cost of production factors may suggest more about quality than advertiser frequency.

An important emerging idea is that these affective dimensions seem to be inter-related rather than causal. The dimensions of Advertiser Fitness seem to be inter-related to the constructs of Perceived Honesty, Perceived Status, Self-Relevance, and Potential Word of Mouth. Evaluations of creativity seem, a priori, to be fairly personal by nature, even when they are broken down into more quantifiable factors such as appropriateness of creative solution, entertaining, and intelligence. A network, or inter-related processing of advertiser traits is to be

expected from the developments in neuroscience demonstrating that the human brain processes simultaneously in neural networks (Baars 2005). This study does not attempt to demonstrate the mental processes, but they do show high levels of inter-relatedness of constructs which support further study in simultaneous processing styles.

Another important illumination provided by this study is the demonstrated relationship between Perceived Honesty of the advertiser and Advertiser Fitness. Perceived Honesty is closely correlated with Advertiser Fitness, suggesting that the advertiser must be perceived as honest in order to rank highly in Advertiser Fitness. This result is also consistent with the findings of Erdem and Swait (1998) regarding credibility as the key element in the signaling perspective on brand equity formation. The results of losing credibility have been shown to be devastating for brands such as Enron and the George Bush War in Iraq. In order for credibility to remain robust, consumers need to be able to interpret signals that provide guarantees of advertiser credibility, in the same vein as the peacock's tail. Fitness indicators such as the peacock's tail have evolved over geological time to provide unfailingly credible evidence of genetic quality.

Since media advertising has not been around long enough to evolve in geological time, there are still imperfections in human-designed signals which can be misleading, dishonest, or downright fraudulent. A brief tour of the history of

modern advertising reveals that with time, more and more regulations come into effect limiting the potential for fraudulent claims in advertising and discouraging misleading or confusing messages. People are naturally suspicious of blatant charlatans and snake-oil salesmen but are not always as rational as the model of Economic Man would suggest. It is expected that better fitness indicators will evolve in time. Until then, it may be useful to use the associations of Advertiser Fitness to take a reading on consumer perceptions of advertiser credibility from time to time.

The implications of these findings for Perceived Status as a correlate of Advertiser Fitness support previous work on brand personalities and highlight the social aspects of products and services. It may be that status is more important to consumers as the social nature of products such as cell phones increases. Within the status construct, perception of advertiser personality correlated most strongly with the Advertiser Fitness construct, overall and for both product categories. This finding suggests that social brands' personalities are important to consumer social networks. For the cell phone service category, perhaps the interactive aspect of the product with the social network heightens this importance.

The importance of status to perceptions of Advertiser Fitness is not surprising. This study links category strength, brand personality, and brand influence under the heading of Perceived Status, and shows a strong correlation to

the construct of Advertiser Fitness and Purchase Intention. The implication is that a start-up brand will have to go the extra mile to make a positive impression – no small task when the budget limitations of start-ups are staged against the formidable category leaders' budgets mentioned herein. The positive aspect of this finding is that other factors such as creativity, honesty, and self-relevance are important dimensions that may be used to offset factors that preclude competitive positions.

Behavioral ecology predictions of self relevance suggested that ad relevance to the consumer would be important in the dimensions of specificity of behavior (e.g., Guilford & Dawkins 1991, Endler 1993, Loftus-Hills & Littlejohn 1992) and while the consumer literature predicts self relevance in the dimension of symbolic reflection of self (e.g., Belk 1988, Fournier 1998, Prentice 1987, Kapferer 2002). The behavioral ecology items were integrated within the Self-Relevance construct to illuminate understanding of the consumer and reflection of consumer values. The findings corroborate predictions with significant correlations, although it is interesting to note that the behavior correlation for the cell phone category is low enough to suggest that matching behaviors, while statistically significant, is not very important when creativity and word of mouth factors are high. This suggests that creative license is extended under some circumstances. It could be useful to further illuminate the circumstances under which creative license is more acceptable to consumers.

The theoretically predicted feedback loop between signalers and receivers that creates the dynamic of signal evolution is not possible to evaluate from the results of this study, but the dimensions of self-relevance seem to suggest that those factors do have some import to the way consumers respond to advertiser signals, and that advertisers will benefit from improving the perception of self-relevance with consumers. Further work is needed on the motivation of the consumer to avoid advertisers' signals when self-relevance is deemed low or non-existent. If avoidance and self-relevance are inversely correlated, it would be very important to advertisers to understand where the threshold of critical self-relevance lies, and what the dimensions of that construct may be for their product category.

While word-of-mouth factors, the dimensions of memorability, coolness, and buzz, are essentially integral to the construct of Advertiser Fitness, it is noteworthy that they are also a consequence of Advertiser Fitness. Word of Mouth is a term that suggests a social network and a process of socially constructing reality. When an ad is remarkable enough for people to bring up to each other in casual conversation, the power of such an impression is arguably the strongest of all possible brand impressions, and word of mouth communication is powerful whether or not the initiator is an opinion leader (Richins 1983). The trust and regard held between people in a social network may be extremely powerful or it may be tenuous – but when people hear other people in their social network mentioning

brands and television spots as cool or interesting or otherwise worthwhile, the value to the brand is priceless. For ads in this study ranked high in Advertiser Fitness, respondents predicted that they would be likely to talk about these ads with their friends.

Memorability and coolness are seen as predictors of word of mouth. The dimensions of word of mouth are most strongly associated with creativity in this study, suggesting that powerful form of consumer communication about brands is directly and integrally related to perceived quality of creativity in advertiser signals. This possibility presents a strong impetus for further research into these relationships.

Implications with regard to theories of consumer choice are favorable with respect to deeper illumination of the ‘peripheral’ route to persuasion as originally described in the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo 1986). These findings suggest evolved strategies with Darwinian qualities lie in the so-called ‘periphery,’ with consequences to the fitness of individuals and survival of species. The survival aspects of these dimensions have been discussed and shown to be important to species that are not known to have cognitive processing at all, so it is logical to conclude that the biological basis of these dimensions of choice are not cognitive *per se*. This opens up a potentially rich and diverse area of future investigation relating animal behavior with consumer behavior and

explicating the observed correspondences between the two. It will be especially interesting to compare the difference in descriptive language between observed choice behavior in animals (presumed to be non-cognitive) and ‘explained’ behavior in human consumption (traditionally presumed to have a cognitive function). It seems clear that the theory and language used within these separate areas of research have evolved with very different foundations for the presumption of operating processes, and future examination of comparable phenomena could shed new light into the proverbial darkness thereof.

Overall, the results of this study support an ecological approach to the study of advertising, from the design of ads to the locus of presentation, their environmental effects, and the inter-relationships between the production of signals and reception or avoidance of them by consumers. The suggestion of an ecological approach is new and unprecedented in advertising research, grounded as it is in economic and psychometric traditions. By demonstrating these relationships, this study introduces potentially important new areas of research in advertising.

7.02 LIMITATIONS AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Generalizations are restricted to the specifics of this study's methodology and sample. The current study attempted to illuminate the relationships between theoretical dimensions of Advertiser Fitness using a dual study correlational technique. In the process of analyzing these results, the limited use of only six discretely measured scores from the first survey for correlations in the second study proved to be less than optimum. Even though all of the expected correlations were significant at the $p < .00$ level, use of all of the thirty-two spots in both surveys would have resulted in continuously measured scores with stronger, more robust correlation coefficients across the board by avoiding the wide gaps between values that accounted for much more variance than a continuous data set would have had.

While these results portend broad application of the Advertiser Fitness construct, further research is needed to demonstrate its usefulness beyond the types and numbers of product categories studied.

Another limitation is reflected in the relatively small sample size for each ad reviewed in Survey 1: Advertiser Fitness. A total of only 32 – 35 observations was used to create the Advertiser Fitness score for each ad. Under more favorable circumstances, it would be desirable to generate statistically validated responses by such demographic variables as age, gender, regionality, political preferences, or educational background. Advertisers will find specificity of target demographics to

be particularly useful in application of the construct of Advertiser Fitness to their own output, and for such specificity, more stringent subject pool selection procedures should be applied.

Further research is needed to ‘tighten’ up the Advertiser Fitness scale for more efficient surveys. These survey items are so closely related to each other in many ways that it may be possible to reduce the scale to fewer than ten items covering all the key dimensions of Advertiser Fitness, thus rendering the scale more practical in application. In particular, the creative aspects of the scale should be further explored and parsed to discover the best ways of applying such a construct in evaluating ads prior to broadcasting them.

Future research should further validate the Advertiser Fitness scale for other samples, other advertising situations, and other modalities of persuasion including product design, audio design, and mobile applications. Application of these concepts may be extended across strategic contexts for brands, products, and services. The interrelationships between dimensions of Advertiser Fitness may likewise be explored across these categories and functions to determine whether the Advertiser Fitness construct is dynamic and context-dependent. The inter-relatedness of Advertiser Fitness dimensions can be explored using statistical methods for illuminating spatial relationships, including structural equation modeling and lattice analysis.

The construct of Advertiser Fitness can be improved by continuing to build the dataset toward a robust index of ad performance along these dimensions. The small size of the ad sample in survey two (six spots) is only a toe in the water of this construct.

7.03 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

For creative professionals, there has never been an instrument for evaluating the creative dimensions of advertising except through various impact measures. This study suggests a possible direction for resolving this gap in the advertising manager's portfolio of research tools. It certainly provides a quantitative response to a young art director's claim that a particularly offensive idea is really cool and attention getting if consumers are not likely to find the idea self-relevant, supportive of advertiser credibility, or suggestive of status. A well-known American comedienne, Roseanne Barr, recently commented that contemporary youth expect to be offended by advertising so much that they are now offended if ads are not offensive enough. This research may provide a foundation for confirming or disconfirming such an idea.

Advertiser Fitness represents an opportunity to explore how perceptions of creativity drive consumer evaluation of signalers. While it does not provide an objective standard of creative output, the concept of an objective standard is not very useful to advertisers. A consumer may be a big country music fan and say of hip hop, “That’s *not* music,” while the hip hop aficionado may find the same subject wildly creative. Having an objective standard is not, then, an indicator of what consumers may desire or consume. This research seeks to evaluate consumer perceptions which may be indicators of consumer purchase and finds an association between perceptions of creativity and stated intention to purchase. This development offers advertising agencies a very direct way to evaluate the quality of creative advertising products against each other. It further implies that creative factors may figure into consumer choice more directly than previously believed.

Results for the Perceived Status construct suggest that advertisers should be mindful of how a spot reflects on their role as an industry leader. Much has been made in popular and trade press reports in recent years of advertising that appeals to adolescent male humor. The genre has been remarkable for its offensiveness, its lowbrow-ness, and its general rejection of mainstream values for the sake of ‘cutting through the clutter,’ and creating an impression. It remains to be seen whether these spots appealing to ignorance and sloth will have latent negative effects on consumer perceptions of the advertiser, but this research suggests it is an

area that may be of concern to advertisers in the future. The implication here is that the advertiser representing leadership in the community is more favorably perceived than the advertiser not representing leadership. Leadership can be perceived in many ways, and these results do not suggest any type of message as more favorable than another. They do suggest it is an important dimension of consumer perception associated with purchase intention.

Consumer perceptions of advertiser honesty also raise questions for advertisers. The consequences of losing consumer confidence have been laid at the feet of the American public through the famous disgraces of Enron, Martha Stewart, Adelphia, Tyco and WorldCom, for example. This research shows a direct association between perceived advertiser honesty and purchase intent. For a company to approve an ad even a little at odds with consumer perception could be an egregious error, and there could be a cumulative effect over time. This is an area that begs further understanding, research, and practical application.

The relationship between Self-Relevance and Purchase Intent, while expected, further illuminates the dynamic between other constructs and how consumers understand products to be relevant to themselves by looking at behavioral ecology cues. It seems that product relevance is not the only dimension of relevance consumers take into consideration: they are also associating the behavior of the advertiser with their own values and behaviors and seeking

compatibility. Advertisers may benefit from expanding their behavioral presence in their markets, associating their products with social concepts and behaviors to engage a more passionate consumer demographic and incite greater loyalty to the brand.

The importance of perceptions of creativity to predicted word of mouth is remarkable and has particular consequence for advertisers who have been comfortable following tried and true methods. The dimensions of this scale yielded the highest correlation coefficients found in this study, suggesting that an intention to talk about a product is most specifically related to creative factors than to any other construct. This presents a considerable dilemma to advertisers who are looking for new ways to ‘cut through the clutter’ without being so repulsive as to demand comment. When the Word-Of-Mouth results are considered with the Status results, this study suggests it is not enough to be so offensive one garners talk: the big winner is the advertiser who can be creative and respectful of the market at the same time. It will be interesting to explore this dynamic in greater depth across more product categories and other advertising media.

The main contribution of this study to the practice of advertising is that it shows how affective dimensions of creativity and abstracted qualities such as perceived honesty relate to form impressions about the advertiser within market as ecosystems. The advertiser’s personality, perceived honesty, and creativity are

shown to be important to the social relevance of the brand, and dimensions of evaluating human relationships are also applied to the advertiser. It is clear that advertisers whose products and services have social dimensions need to be very informed and precise about their brand personality perception in order to know, relate to, and maintain good relationships with customers. From a behavioral ecological point of view, it is important for brands to be good members of the ecosystem, to strive for status within their category, to be mindful of the dimensions of attractiveness that consumers perceive to be important, and to reflect the 'genetic' quality of their resources authentically and robustly for optimum success.

7.04 CONCLUSION

Recent developments in behavioral ecology, neuroscience, and evolutionary psychology have changed the landscape of understanding of the human mind in ways unforeseen when advertising research was in its nascent stages. Advertising research has not yet embraced these developments and continues to labor under paradigms founded on ideas of rationality and conscious consumer choice. Emerging technologies and insights into the dynamics of the human brain and ecosystems offer the potential to shed new light on consumer choices and need to

be explored for better understanding of a more global construct of advertising that incorporates heretofore immeasurable dimensions.

As developed from an extensive review of literature covering disparate fields of research (behavioral ecology, evolutionary psychology, economics, consumer behavior) and shown in this study, advertising can be seen as the signaling of members of a consumer market social ecosystem, reflecting the ‘genetic’ quality of the signaler as a potential object of consumption, similar to the genetic quality of potential mates in natural ecosystems. In nature, the qualities and dimensions of signals reflect the qualities and dimensions of the genetic makeup of the signaler, and by extension, the attractiveness or ‘fitness’ of the brand. Commercial advertising media have proliferated too quickly in the last century for the human brain to co-evolve adaptations for optimizing signal processing, and consequently, advertising media have grown without check to a point where few would argue that there is too much clutter in the system for people to process. Improving the signal-reception fit between advertisers and consumers will be important to improving the economics of advertising and to the quality of the human environment.

The evolving fit between advertisers (signalers) and consumers (receivers) is seen as a dynamic process in which the preferences and perceptions of consumers, however fuzzy, affective, automatic, unconscious, or evolutionarily primitive, act

on the design of the signals produced by advertisers in a continuous feedback loop. Since, theoretically, a lot of this selective pressure happens at an automatic level of mental processing (unconscious), the difficulty of quantifying it continues to pose a challenge to researchers. Such difficulty should not be seen as a barrier. The current study shows that parsing the nebulous construct of creativity is not impossible. It may never be perfect, but it can be explored quantitatively and gradually improved.

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL TABLES AND FIGURES

Table A-1. Summary of TV Spot SumScores, —Advertiser Fitness Survey

Auto Insurance Brand	Vid#	n	SumScore
Geico <i>French</i>	19	34	1641
<i>Geico Airport</i>	8	32	1768
<i>21st Century Italian Job</i>	20	31	1797
<i>21st Century Speed</i>	12	33	1802
<i>State Farm AC</i>	24	33	1822
<i>Geico Insult</i>	1	33	1831
<i>Mercury Captured</i>	14	34	1866
Mercury <i>Interview</i>	31	33	1889
<i>Geico Apology</i>	16	34	1921
<i>State Farm Roadhouse Blues</i>	32	32	1995
<i>AllState Get Onboard</i>	25	34	2108
<i>Nationwide Rocket Luge</i>	26	32	2128
<i>AllState Girls Day Out</i>	15	33	2131
<i>AllState New Car</i>	11	32	2252
<i>Nationwide Light Switch</i>	5	33	2296
<i>Geico Eyeball</i>	27	35	2308
<i>Nationwide Pool</i>	22	22	2309
AllState Secret Shortcut	2	33	2411

Cell Phone Service Brand	Vid#	n	SumScore
<i>Pocket Limo</i>	7	33	1710
Telstra <i>Tommy Lee</i>	9	34	1775
<i>Virgin Mobile Shane</i>	29	33	1851
<i>Vodafone Unplugged</i>	3	32	1883
<i>T-Mobile Mixit</i>	28	33	1887
<i>Vodafone Who Are You?</i>	17	33	1891
<i>Sprint Minutes</i>	6	33	1930
<i>Telstra Collie</i>	18	34	2011
<i>Verizon Urgent</i>	30	36	2022
<i>Virgin Mobile Mime March</i>	13	33	2052
Sprint <i>Clones</i>	23	34	2062
<i>Verizon Ferret</i>	10	34	2101
<i>T-Mobile Free Roader</i>	4	34	2219
Motorola <i>Phone Booth</i>	21	35	2634

Table A-2. Descriptive Statistics, Advertiser Fitness

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
<i>Concept</i>	1	7	4.87	1.72
<i>Idea Appropriate</i>	1	7	4.07	1.84
<i>Ad Presentation</i>	1	7	4.92	1.71
<i>Fit View</i>	1	7	4.75	1.66
<i>Coolness</i>	1	7	5.29	1.60
<i>Offensive-Entertaining</i>	1	7	5.10	1.27
<i>Tone</i>	1	7	5.05	1.48
<i>Intelligence</i>	1	7	4.34	1.81
<i>Production Quality</i>	1	7	5.21	1.51
<i>Special FX Quality</i>	1	7	4.87	1.31
<i>Special FX Impression</i>	1	7	4.78	1.28
<i>Feeling Ad</i>	1	7	4.69	1.68
<i>Feeling Product</i>	1	7	4.65	1.39
<i>Familiarity</i>	1	7	4.83	1.78
<i>Attractiveness Actors</i>	1	7	4.34	1.44
<i>Utility of Information</i>	1	7	4.45	1.73

n_{obs} = 1065

Table A-3. Advertiser Fitness Factor Loadings for Two Factors

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.585	53.656	53.656	8.225	51.407	51.407
2	1.255	7.845	61.501	.975	6.091	57.498
3	.996	6.223	67.724			
4	.888	5.549	73.273			
5	.753	4.707	77.980			
6	.589	3.683	81.663			
7	.439	2.745	84.408			
8	.428	2.674	87.082			
9	.380	2.376	89.457			
10	.354	2.215	91.672			
11	.307	1.922	93.593			
12	.255	1.594	95.188			
13	.246	1.536	96.724			
14	.211	1.318	98.042			
15	.160	1.000	99.042			
16	.153	.958	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table A-4. Advertiser Fitness Factor Loadings for Single Factor

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.585	53.656	53.656	8.168	51.052	51.052
2	1.255	7.845	61.501			
3	.996	6.223	67.724			
4	.888	5.549	73.273			
5	.753	4.707	77.980			
6	.589	3.683	81.663			
7	.439	2.745	84.408			
8	.428	2.674	87.082			
9	.380	2.376	89.457			
10	.354	2.215	91.672			
11	.307	1.922	93.593			
12	.255	1.594	95.188			
13	.246	1.536	96.724			
14	.211	1.318	98.042			
15	.160	1.000	99.042			
16	.153	.958	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Figure A-1. Advertiser Fitness Factor Variance

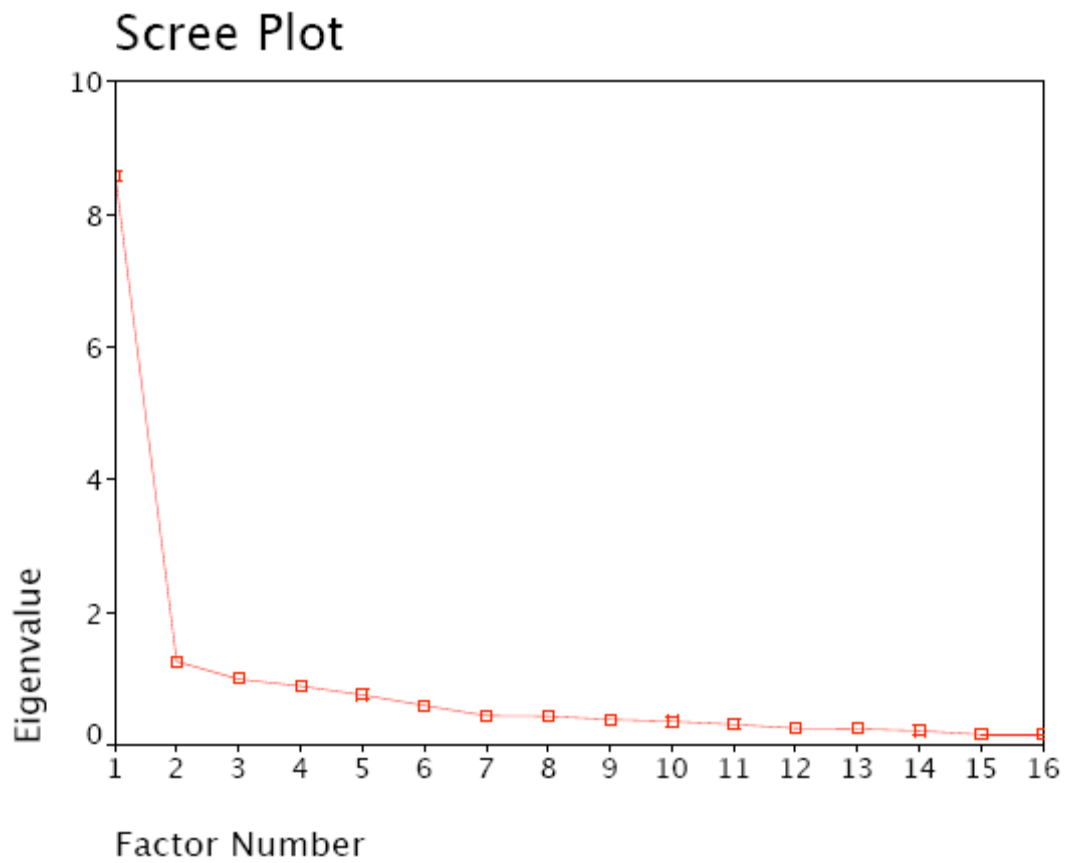


Table A-5. Audience Perceptions of TV Advertisers (Survey 2)
Descriptive Statistics

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
<i>Credibility</i>	1.0	7.0	4.53	1.64
<i>Opinion</i>	1.0	7.0	4.23	1.31
<i>Understanding</i>	1.0	7.0	4.54	1.67
<i>Authenticity</i>	1.0	7.0	4.44	1.49
<i>Approval</i>	1.0	7.0	4.31	1.45
<i>Behavior</i>	1.0	7.0	4.04	1.64
<i>Values</i>	1.0	7.0	4.28	1.48
<i>Truth</i>	1.0	7.0	4.36	1.49
<i>Untruth</i>	1.0	7.0	4.08	1.25
<i>Informativeness</i>	1.0	7.0	3.71	1.68
<i>Memorability</i>	1.0	7.0	3.93	1.66
<i>Coolness</i>	1.0	7.0	4.22	1.74
<i>Buzz</i>	1.0	7.0	3.11	1.61
<i>Honesty</i>	1.0	7.0	4.04	1.30
<i>Category Strength</i>	1.0	7.0	4.31	1.49
<i>Self Reflection</i>	1.0	7.0	4.20	1.28
<i>Influential</i>	1.0	7.0	4.24	1.46
<i>Status</i>	1.0	7.0	4.34	1.45
<i>Personality</i>	1.0	7.0	4.25	1.54
<i>Environmental</i>	1.0	7.0	3.98	.99
<i>Reputation</i>	1.0	7.0	4.74	1.27
<i>Customer Service</i>	1.0	7.0	4.80	1.48
<i>Brand Quality</i>	1.0	7.0	4.56	1.50
<i>Brand Pleasantness</i>	1.0	7.0	4.52	1.48
<i>Service Quality</i>	1.0	7.0	4.51	1.48
<i>Boring</i>	1.0	7.0	3.68	1.90
<i>Fun</i>	1.0	7.0	4.11	1.86
<i>Clever</i>	1.0	7.0	4.26	1.88
<i>Amusing</i>	1.0	7.0	4.31	1.90
<i>Enthusiasm</i>	1.0	7.0	3.89	1.84
<i>Attention</i>	1.0	7.0	4.32	1.93
<i>Excitement</i>	1.0	7.0	3.83	1.86
<i>Purchase Intent</i>	1.0	7.0	3.77	1.58
n _{obs} = 2085				

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRES

Study Number 2007-03-0017

Audience Perceptions of TV Ads

This study is designed to find out how you assess the various messages in TV ads, and it will take about 15 minutes of your time to complete the study. If interested, you can log onto the study site and fill out the survey by clicking on the link below. No prior sign-up is required. When you agree to participate, you will view TV commercials online (please adjust your sound level on your computer to an appropriate level). By clicking “submit” you are agreeing to the use of your responses in this study. When you complete the study, please fill out the receipt page to turn into your instructor for course credit. If you are not where you can easily print the page, you can save a screen version for printing later by _____.

URL for web-based research <http://www.ciadvertising.org/karen%5Fflee/survey/>

15 minutes to complete

For further information or questions, please contact Karen Lee at krayonn@mail.utexas.edu

Audience Perception of TV Ads

IRB# 2007-03-0017

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to find out how you perceive elements of six different television commercials. Below is a description of the study and the Principal Investigator will be available via email to answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Primary Investigators:

Karen Lee
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Advertising
The University of Texas at Austin
512.444.3816
Krayonn@mail.utexas.edu

Funding Source: None.

What is the purpose of this study? The goal of this study is to find out how consumers like you perceive elements of television ads. The questionnaire that you are asked to fill out will help researchers understand general perceptions held by consumers.

What will be done if you take part in this research study? If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to view a series of television commercials and answer questions online. The whole procedure will last approximately 15 minutes.

What are the possible discomforts and risks? Your participation in this study will pose no discomforts and risks beyond those encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits to you or to others? The results of this study will help researchers understand consumers' perceptions of television ads and advertisers. Further, advertisers will benefit from the knowledge of how to better serve consumers in their communication efforts.

If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything? No.

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study? No.

What if you are injured because of the study? It is highly unlikely that injuries will result from participating in this study. Therefore, no medical treatment will be provided.

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you? Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence your current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin.

How can you withdraw from this research study and who should you call if you have questions? You could simply leave the web page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Jody L. Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at 512/232-2685 or jlj@mail.utexas.edu.

How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected? There will be no video or audio recording of the activity. No personally identifying information will be connected to your responses, and so your responses will be received anonymously. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. If the research project is sponsored, then the sponsor also has the legal right to review your research records. Otherwise, your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study? *[beyond publishing or presenting the results]* The researchers will receive no monetary or other benefits from your participation beyond those normally associated with conducting research, such as knowledge generation.

As a representative of this study, the PIs have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study. You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. By clicking on the "proceed" button below, you are not waiving any of your legal rights and agree to participate in the study by responding to the survey questions.

PROCEED

INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. In the following sections, we would like you to view a series of commercials and give us your reaction to each ad. These commercials will be viewed one by one. That is, upon viewing an ad, you will be asked to answer a set of questions regarding your feelings/thoughts about the ad. The same procedure will follow for the subsequent ads.

Each commercial will play immediately after you open the page. Please view the commercials as naturally as you would in your everyday life. If you miss part of the commercial, you will be able to watch it again from the beginning by clicking on the arrow on the screen.



Special Note: Please set the audio/video of the computer you're using to the appropriate level since you will be viewing television commercials as part of the study.

Please click here to begin

[Start Survey](#)



Survey

This online survey is a part of an academic research project regarding audience perceptions of broadcast ads.

All information you provide will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Your data will not be analyzed individually and the data will be used only

collectively.

It will take about 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire. We greatly appreciate your time in helping with this academic research project.

Q1.YOUR AGE ?

PLEASE ENTER AS NUMBER:

Q2.YOUR GENDER?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Q3. IF YOU HAVE A CELL PHONE SERVICE PROVIDER, PLEASE IDENTIFY WHICH:

- ☐ Cingular
- ☐ Sprint
- ☐ Verizon
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q4. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR EXISTING BRAND?

- ☐ Extremely dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Extremely satisfied

Q5. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A CUSTOMER OF YOUR EXISTING BRAND?

- ☐ Less than a year

- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ More than 3 years

Q6. WHO CHOSE THIS BRAND FOR CELL PHONE SERVICE?

- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Me
- ☐ Employer

Q7. IF YOU HAVE AUTO INSURANCE, PLEASE IDENTIFY WHICH BRAND:

- ☐ AllState
- ☐ State Farm
- ☐ Geico
- ☐ Nationwide
- ☐ Progressive
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q8. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR EXISTING BRAND?

- ☐ Extremely dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Extremely satisfied

Q9. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INSURED WITH YOUR EXISTING BRAND?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-3 years

☐ More than 3 years

Q10. HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THIS BRAND?

☐ Parents

☐ Me

☐ Employer

Submit and Next

Please view the following ad and tell us your perceptions.

[Random selection and loading of one of 32 videos goes here.]

**Wait for video to be downloaded and when you see the video,
click on it to start**

Q11.THE AD CONCEPT WAS:

- ☐ Completely inappropriate for the message/product
- ☐ Mostly inappropriate for the message/product
- ☐ Slightly inappropriate for the message/product
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Slightly appropriate for the message/product
- ☐ Mostly appropriate for the message/product
- ☐ Completely appropriate for the message/product

Q12.I FOUND THE IDEA OF THE AD:

- ☐ Very irrelevant to my life or experience
- ☐ Somewhat irrelevant to my life or experience
- ☐ Slightly irrelevant to my life or experience
- ☐ Neither irrelevant nor relevant
- ☐ Slightly relevant to my life or experience
- ☐ Somewhat relevant to my life or experience
- ☐ Very relevant to my life or experience

Q13. THE WAY THE IDEA OF THE AD PRESENTED WAS:

- ☐ Completely expected
- ☐ Somewhat expected
- ☐ Slightly expected
- ☐ Neither unexpected nor expected
- ☐ Slightly unexpected
- ☐ Somewhat unexpected
- ☐ Completely unexpected

Q14. WITH RESPECT TO THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE AND HOW IT FITS INTO MY WORLD VIEW, I THOUGHT THE IDEA OF THE AD WAS:

- ☐ Extremely inappropriate
- ☐ Somewhat inappropriate
- ☐ Slightly inappropriate
- ☐ Neither inappropriate nor appropriate
- ☐ Slightly appropriate
- ☐ Somewhat appropriate
- ☐ Extremely appropriate

Q15. THE WAY THE AD WAS PRESENTED:

- ☐ Very uncool; very traditional or conservative, using cliché and/or trite elements, or very boring
- ☐ Somewhat not cool, somewhat traditional or conservative, the same old thing, or somewhat boring
- ☐ Marginally not cool, marginally traditional or conservative, the usual thing, or marginally boring
- ☐ Neither interesting in a positive way nor interesting in a negative way
- ☐ Not very cool, not very contemporary, barely attempting to be relevant, or trying and not succeeding to be hip
- ☐ Sort of cool, sort of contemporary, trying to be cutting edge, or trying to be hip
- ☐ Very cool, very contemporary, out on the cutting edge, or very hip

Q16. I FOUND THE AD:

- ☐ Extremely offensive
- ☐ Somewhat offensive
- ☐ Slightly Offensive
- ☐ Neither Offensive nor Entertaining

- ☐ Slightly Entertaining
- ☐ Somewhat entertaining
- ☐ Extremely entertaining

Q17. I THOUGHT THE TONE OF THE AD WAS:

- ☐ Very inappropriate
- ☐ Somewhat inappropriate
- ☐ Slightly inappropriate
- ☐ Neither inappropriate nor appropriate
- ☐ Slightly appropriate
- ☐ Somewhat appropriate
- ☐ Very appropriate

Q18. MY SENSE OF THE AD IS THAT IT WAS:

- ☐ Extremely dumb
- ☐ Somewhat dumb
- ☐ Slightly dumb
- ☐ Neither dumb nor intelligent
- ☐ Slightly intelligent
- ☐ Somewhat intelligent
- ☐ Extremely intelligent

Q19. I THOUGHT THE AD PRODUCTION WAS:

- ☐ Very poorly done
- ☐ Somewhat poorly done
- ☐ Slightly poorly done
- ☐ Neither poorly done nor well done
- ☐ Slightly well done

- ☐ Somewhat well done
- ☐ Extremely well done

Q20. WITH RESPECT TO THE DESIGN QUALITY OF SPECIAL EFFECTS IN THE CREATION OF THE AD (DIGITAL EFFECTS, FANTASTIC CREATURES, UNREALISTIC EVENTS, DREAM SEQUENCES, ETC.)

- ☐ I thought the special effects were very poorly done, very uncool, or very detracting
- ☐ I thought the special effects were somewhat poorly done, somewhat uncool, or somewhat detracting
- ☐ I thought the special effects were marginally poorly done, marginally uncool, or marginally detracting
- ☐ I didn't notice any special effects
- ☐ I thought the special effects were marginally well done, marginally cool, or marginally effective
- ☐ I thought the special effects were somewhat well done, somewhat cool, or somewhat effective
- ☐ I thought the special effects were very well done, very cool, or very effective

Q21. WITH RESPECT TO THE DISPLAY OF SPECIAL EFFECTS IN THE CREATION OF THE AD (DIGITAL EFFECTS, FANTASTIC CREATURES, UNREALISTIC EVENTS, DREAM SEQUENCES, ETC.)

- ☐ I thought the overall use of special effects made a very negative impression
- ☐ I thought the overall use of special effects made a somewhat negative impression
- ☐ I thought the overall use of special effects made a marginally negative impression
- ☐ I didn't notice any special effects
- ☐ I thought the overall use of special effects made a marginally positive impression
- ☐ I thought the overall use of special effects made a somewhat positive impression
- ☐ I thought the overall use of special effects made a very positive impression

Q22. MY FEELING ABOUT THE AD IS:

- ☐ Extremely negative
- ☐ Somewhat negative
- ☐ Slightly negative
- ☐ Neither negative nor positive
- ☐ Slightly positive
- ☐ Somewhat positive
- ☐ Extremely positive

Q23. MY FEELING ABOUT THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE IS:

- ☐ Extremely negative
- ☐ Somewhat negative
- ☐ Slightly negative
- ☐ Neither negative nor positive
- ☐ Slightly positive
- ☐ Somewhat positive
- ☐ Extremely positive

Q24. THE BRAND ADVERTISER OF THIS PRODUCT OR SERVICE IS:

- ☐ Totally unfamiliar to me
- ☐ Somewhat unfamiliar to me
- ☐ Slightly unfamiliar to me
- ☐ Neither unfamiliar nor familiar
- ☐ Slightly familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Very familiar to me

Q25. THE ACTORS IN THE AD WERE:

- ☐ Extremely unattractive

- ☐ Somewhat unattractive
- ☐ Slightly unattractive
- ☐ Neither unattractive nor attractive
- ☐ Slightly attractive
- ☐ Somewhat attractive
- ☐ Extremely attractive

Q26. I FEEL LIKE THIS AD CONVEYED INFORMATION THAT IS :

- ☐ Extremely useless
- ☐ Somewhat useless
- ☐ Slightly useless
- ☐ Neither useless nor useful
- ☐ Slightly useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Extremely useful

[Submit and Next](#)

**For the survey, this section repeated six times between **

Thank you!

This is the end of the questionnaire.

**Please click on the button below
to request your participation credit.**

Credit Request

Confirmation of Study Participation
Audience Perceptions of TV Spots
(Study ID# 2007-03-0017)

Please fill out the form below!

Your Name (Last, First)	<input type="text"/>
Your UT EID	<input type="text"/>
Instructor's Name	<input type="text"/>
Class	<input type="text"/>

If you have questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher,

Karen Lee (krayonn@mail.utexas.edu)

END OF SURVEY 1

Survey 2:

Audience Perceptions of TV Advertisers

Study Number 2007-03-0017

Audience Impressions of TV Advertisers Study

This study is designed to find out how you assess TV advertisers, and it will take about 25 minutes of your time to complete the study. If interested, you can log onto the study site and fill out the survey by clicking on the link below. No prior sign-up is required. When you agree to participate, you will view TV commercials online (please adjust your sound level on your computer to an appropriate level). By clicking “submit” you are agreeing to the use of your responses in this study. When you complete the study, please fill out the receipt page to turn into your instructor for course credit. If you are not where you can easily print the page, you can save a screen version for printing later by

_____.

URL for web-based research NEW LINK HERE

25 minutes to complete

For further information or questions, please contact Karen Lee at krayonn@mail.utexas.edu

Audience Impressions of TV Advertisers

IRB# 2007-03-0017

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to find out how you perceive elements of six different television commercials. Below is a description of the study and the Principal Investigator will be available via email to answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Primary Investigators:

Karen Lee
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Advertising
The University of Texas at Austin
512.444.3816
Krayonn@mail.utexas.edu

Funding Source: None.

What is the purpose of this study? The goal of this study is to find out how consumers like you perceive elements of television ads. The questionnaire that you are asked to fill out will help researchers understand general perceptions held by consumers.

What will be done if you take part in this research study? If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to view a series of television commercials and answer questions online. The whole procedure will last approximately 15 minutes.

What are the possible discomforts and risks? Your participation in this study will pose no discomforts and risks beyond those encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits to you or to others? The results of this study will help researchers understand consumers' perceptions of television ads and advertisers. Further, advertisers will benefit from the knowledge of how to better serve consumers in their communication efforts.

If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything? No.

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study? No.

What if you are injured because of the study? It is highly unlikely that injuries will result from participating in this study. Therefore, no medical treatment will be provided.

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you? Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence your current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin.

How can you withdraw from this research study and who should you call if you have questions? You could simply leave the web page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Jody L. Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at 512/232-2685 or jlj@mail.utexas.edu.

How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected? There will be no video or audio recording of the activity. No personally identifying information will be connected to your responses, and so your responses will be received anonymously. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. If the research project is sponsored, then the sponsor also has the legal right to review your research records. Otherwise, your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study? *[beyond publishing or presenting the results]* The researchers will receive no monetary or other benefits from your participation beyond those normally associated with conducting research, such as knowledge generation.

As a representative of this study, the PIs have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study. You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. By clicking on the "proceed" button below, you are not waiving any of your legal rights and agree to participate in the study by responding to the survey questions.

PROCEED

INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. In the following sections, we would like you to view a series of commercials and give us your reaction to each ad. These commercials will be viewed one by one. That is, upon viewing an ad, you will be asked to answer a set of questions regarding your feelings/thoughts about the ad. The same procedure will follow for the subsequent ads.

Each commercial will play immediately after you open the page. Please view the commercials as naturally as you would in your everyday life. If you miss part of the commercial, you will be able to watch it again from the beginning by clicking on the arrow on the screen.



Special Note: Please set the audio/video of the computer you're using to the appropriate level since you will be viewing television commercials as part of the study.

Please click here to begin

[Start Survey](#)



Audience Impressions of TV Advertisers Survey

This online survey is a part of an academic research project regarding audience perceptions of broadcast ads.

All information you provide will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Your data will not be analyzed individually and the data will be used only collectively.

It will take about 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire. We greatly appreciate your time in helping with this academic research project.

Q1.YOUR AGE ?

PLEASE ENTER AS NUMBER:

Q2.YOUR GENDER?

☐

Male

☐

Female

Q3. IF YOU HAVE A CELL PHONE SERVICE PROVIDER, PLEASE IDENTIFY WHICH:

☐

Cingular

☐

Sprint

☐

Verizon

☐

Other (please specify)

Q4. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR EXISTING BRAND?

- ☐ Extremely dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Extremely satisfied

Q5. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A CUSTOMER OF YOUR EXISTING BRAND?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ More than 3 years

Q6. WHO CHOSE THIS BRAND FOR CELL PHONE SERVICE?

- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Me
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Spouse

Q7. IF YOU HAVE AUTO INSURANCE, PLEASE IDENTIFY WHICH BRAND:

- ☐ AllState
- ☐ State Farm
- ☐ Geico
- ☐ Nationwide
- ☐ Progressive
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q8. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR EXISTING BRAND?

- ☐ Extremely dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Slightly satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Extremely satisfied

Q9. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INSURED WITH YOUR EXISTING BRAND?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ More than 3 years

Q10. HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THIS BRAND?

- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Me
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Spouse

[Submit and Next](#)

Please view the following ad and tell us your perceptions.

[Random selection and loading of one of 32 videos goes here.]

**Wait for video to be downloaded and when you see the video,
click on it to start**

Q11. COMPARED TO OTHER ADS YOU'VE NOTICED ON TV, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THIS ONE FOR CREATIVITY AND NOTICEABILITY?:

- ☐ Extremely Low—one of the worst
- ☐ Somewhat Low
- ☐ Slightly lower than Average
- ☐ Neither High nor Low—completely Average
- ☐ Slightly higher than Average
- ☐ Somewhat high
- ☐ Extremely high—one of the best

Q12. AFTER VIEWING THE AD, WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THIS PRODUCT OR SERVICE?

- ☐ A lot worse than it was before I saw the ad
- ☐ Somewhat worse than it was before I saw the ad
- ☐ Slightly worse than it was before I saw the ad
- ☐ Neither better nor worse than before I saw the ad
- ☐ Slightly better than it was before I saw the ad
- ☐ Somewhat better than it was before I saw the ad
- ☐ A lot better than it was before I saw the ad

Q13. HOW WELL DO YOU THINK THIS ADVERTISER UNDERSTANDS YOUR NEEDS AND INTERESTS WITH REGARD TO THIS PRODUCT OR SERVICE?:

- ☐ Completely lacking understanding—doesn't get me at all
- ☐ Somewhat lacking understanding – very little insight into me
- ☐ Slightly lacking understanding—wants to understand me but missing the idea
- ☐ Not even trying to understand
- ☐ Slightly understanding – trying and barely succeeding

- ☐ Somewhat understanding – gets the general idea
- ☐ Completely understanding – totally gets me and my world

Q14. DO YOU BELIEVE THE AD AUTHENTICALLY REPRESENTED THE ADVERTISER'S TRUE NATURE? :

- ☐ Absolutely not – totally zooming me
- ☐ Somewhat not – trying to lead me on
- ☐ Slightly not – I have a feeling there's something under the table
- ☐ I don't have a sense of the advertiser's true nature
- ☐ Slightly – I think this is probably the deal
- ☐ Somewhat yes – I think they're trying to show me who they are
- ☐ Absolutely yes – I think this is totally who they are

Q15. BASED ON THIS AD, MY APPROVAL RATING FOR THE BRAND ADVERTISED IS:

- ☐ Very low
- ☐ Somewhat low
- ☐ Marginally low
- ☐ Neither low nor high
- ☐ Marginally high
- ☐ Somewhat high
- ☐ Very high

Q16. THE AD REPRESENTS ATTITUDES OR BEHAVIORS I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE IN MY LIFE:

- ☐ No way
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Maybe not
- ☐ I don't relate to the attitudes and behaviors in the ad at all

- ☐ I could go there, maybe
- ☐ I would like to go there if I get a chance
- ☐ This is what I am all about

Q17. I THOUGHT THE AD REPRESENTED VALUES AND MORALS APPROPRIATE FOR MY IDEA OF SOCIETY AND PERSONAL BEHAVIOR:

- ☐ Very inappropriate
- ☐ Somewhat inappropriate
- ☐ Slightly inappropriate
- ☐ Neither inappropriate nor appropriate
- ☐ Slightly appropriate
- ☐ Somewhat appropriate
- ☐ Very appropriate

Q18. MY SENSE OF THE AD IS THAT IT WAS:

- ☐ Extremely untruthful
- ☐ Somewhat untruthful
- ☐ Slightly untruthful
- ☐ Hedging truth (neither lying nor telling the truth)
- ☐ Slightly truthful
- ☐ Somewhat truthful
- ☐ Extremely truthful

Q19. IF YOU THOUGHT THE AD WAS HEDGING THE TRUTH, HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE HEDGE?:

- ☐ Seriously and unconvincingly hedging
- ☐ Somewhat unconvincingly hedging
- ☐ Slightly unconvincingly hedging

- ☐ I stopped paying attention when I figured they were hedging
- ☐ Slightly hedging but in a way that's OK
- ☐ Somewhat hedging but in a way that's OK
- ☐ Extremely out there with a very big hedge but I was so entertained I didn't care about the truth

Q20. HOW USEFUL WAS THE INFORMATION IN THE AD TO YOU?:

- ☐ Totally useless
- ☐ Mostly useless
- ☐ Slightly useless
- ☐ Indifferent
- ☐ Slightly useful
- ☐ Mostly useful
- ☐ Totally useful

Q21. HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK THIS AD STANDS OUT COMPARED TO OTHER ADS YOU'VE SEEN?

- ☐ completely forgettable
- ☐ mostly forgettable
- ☐ slightly forgettable
- ☐ I wouldn't bring it up in conversation, but if someone else did, I might remember it
- ☐ slightly memorable—I might mention it to someone else
- ☐ pretty memorable—I would probably tell my friends about it
- ☐ extremely memorable—I will probably look it up on YouTube and send the link to my friends when I get done with this survey.

Q22. THIS AD IS:

- ☐ Extremely boring
- ☐ Somewhat boring

- ☐ Slightly boring
- ☐ Same old same old
- ☐ Slightly cool or distinctive
- ☐ Somewhat cool or distinctive
- ☐ Extremely cool or distinctive

Q23. WHEN HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS, WOULD THIS AD BE TALKED ABOUT?:

- ☐ Completely socially irrelevant
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Maybe, but I doubt it under most circumstances
- ☐ Maybe, depending on which friends
- ☐ I have some friends who might find it remarkable
- ☐ Most likely
- ☐ Without a doubt

Q24. I FEEL LIKE THIS ADVERTISER IS:

- ☐ Very dishonest
- ☐ Somewhat dishonest
- ☐ Slightly dishonest
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ Slightly honest
- ☐ Somewhat honest
- ☐ Very honest

Q25. HOW WELL DO YOU THINK THIS ADVERTISER REPRESENTS CATEGORY STRENGTH AND LEADERSHIP?:

- ☐ Not at all a contender in strength and trailing in the category—a loser
- ☐ Somewhat of a loser, may appeal to a different demographic

- ☐ Slightly on the losing end of the scale, not very strong, needs to reposition or get a new agency or something to get relevant, but the product might be OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Low level strength and hoping to get ahead—leadership is a way off
- ☐ Mid-level strength and aspirations of leadership
- ☐ Highest strength and leadership

Q26. THIS AD MADE ME THINK ABOUT MY OWN DESIRE OR NEED FOR THIS TYPE OF THING IN A _____ WAY:

- ☐ very negative
- ☐ somewhat negative
- ☐ slightly negative
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ slightly pro-active
- ☐ somewhat pro-active
- ☐ extremely pro-active

Q27. I THINK THIS AD IS:

- ☐ Extremely self-deprecating—makes the company look idiotic
- ☐ Somewhat self-deprecating—makes the company look sort of bad
- ☐ Slightly self-deprecating—makes the company look uncool
- ☐ Not influential
- ☐ Slightly influential—I find it convincing enough to be impressed
- ☐ Somewhat influential—I find it kind of convincing
- ☐ Extremely influential—I find it very convincing

Q28. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THIS ADVERTISER FOR SOCIAL STATUS?

- ☐ Absolute low end of the scale

- ☐ Mid-low end of scale
- ☐ Lower than average
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Slightly higher than average
- ☐ Mid-high end of scale
- ☐ Highest end of scale

Q29. IF THIS ADVERTISER WERE SUDDENLY MAGICALLY TRANSFORMED FROM A LARGE COMPANY TO AN INDIVIDUAL, A PERSONALITY (SORT OF LIKE A MAGICIAN TURNING INTO A BIRD OR ANIMAL), HOW ATTRACTIVE DO YOU THINK THAT MAGICALLY TRANSFORMED INDIVIDUAL MIGHT BE?:

- ☐ Totally unattractive—an ogre, troll, or monster
- ☐ Mostly unattractive—the “flaws” loom large
- ☐ Slightly unattractive—average but with a few “flaws”
- ☐ Totally average
- ☐ Slightly attractive—in a non-threatening way
- ☐ Somewhat attractive—I’d listen to what they had to say
- ☐ Totally attractive—your idea of a really attractive person you’d want to know and love

Q30. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THIS PRODUCT OR SERVICE IN TERMS OF ECOLOGICAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL CORRECTNESS (CONSIDER MANUFACTURING, WASTE, RESOURCES, RECYCLE-ABILITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, ETC) ?:

- ☐ Very bad for environment
- ☐ Somewhat bad for environment
- ☐ Slightly bad for environment
- ☐ No relation to environment
- ☐ Slightly good for environment
- ☐ Somewhat good for environment

- ☐ Absolutely good for environment

Q31. THE ADVERTISER'S REPUTATION IS:

- ☐ Very bad
- ☐ Somewhat bad
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ OK
- ☐ Pretty good
- ☐ Impeccable—extremely good

Q32. I BELIEVE THIS ADVERTISER IS:

- ☐ Totally not customer oriented – they make it hard to contact them and harder to get a response, as if dealing with their customers was some kind of punishment
- ☐ Somewhat not customer oriented – they just don't think about the customer
- ☐ Barely not customer oriented—they have their minds on other things but they'll get back to you sooner or later
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly customer oriented--trying
- ☐ Somewhat customer oriented—doing a fair job
- ☐ Totally customer oriented—easy, courteous, fast and friendly, remarkable

Q33. IN MY OPINION, THIS ADVERTISER IS:

- ☐ Very bad
- ☐ Somewhat bad
- ☐ Slightly bad
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly good

- ☐ Somewhat good
- ☐ Very good

Q34. MY SENSE OF THE ADVERTISER IS:

- ☐ Very unpleasant
- ☐ Somewhat unpleasant
- ☐ Slightly unpleasant
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly pleasant
- ☐ Somewhat pleasant
- ☐ Extremely pleasant

Q35. MY IDEA OF THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE IN THE AD IS:

- ☐ Very poor quality
- ☐ Somewhat poor quality
- ☐ Slightly poor quality
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly good quality
- ☐ Somewhat good quality
- ☐ Extremely good quality

Q36. THE AD WAS DULL AND BORING:

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Slightly disagree
- ☐ Indifferent
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree

- ☐ Strongly agree

Q37. THE AD WAS LOTS OF FUN TO WATCH AND TO LISTEN TO:

- ☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Slightly disagree
☐ Indifferent
☐ Slightly agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ Strongly agree

Q38. THIS AD IS QUITE CLEVER AND ENTERTAINING:

- ☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Slightly disagree
☐ Indifferent
☐ Slightly agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ Strongly agree

Q39. THIS AD IS AMUSING:

- ☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Slightly disagree
☐ Indifferent
☐ Slightly agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ Strongly agree

Q40. THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE AD IS CATCHING—IT PICKS ME UP:

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Slightly disagree
- ☐ Indifferent
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q41. THE CHARACTERS OR PEOPLE IN THE AD CAPTURED MY ATTENTION:

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Slightly disagree
- ☐ Indifferent
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q42. THIS AD IS EXCITING:

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Slightly disagree
- ☐ Indifferent
- ☐ Slightly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q43. BASED ON THIS AD, I WOULD BE _____ TO PURCHASE THIS PRODUCT:

- ☐ extremely unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Slightly unlikely
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Extremely likely

Submit and Next

Thank you!

This is the end of the questionnaire.

**Please click on the button below
to request your participation credit.**

Credit Request

Confirmation of Study Participation
Audience Perceptions of TV Spots
(Study ID# 2007-03-0017)

Please fill out the form below!

Your Name (Last, First)	<input type="text"/>
Your UT EID	<input type="text"/>
Instructor's Name	<input type="text"/>
Class	<input type="text"/>

If you have questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher,

Karen Lee (krayonn@mail.utexas.edu)

END OF SURVEY 2

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VITA

Karen Elizabeth Lee was born in Edinburg, Texas, in the United States, on 20 January 1957, the daughter of William Leon Lee, Jr., and Beverly Ione Foedisch Lee. After graduation from Edinburg High School, she enrolled at Utah State University, Logan, Utah, in September 1975. She received her Bachelor of Science in Biology with an emphasis in Zoology and a minor in Chemistry in June, 1978, and entered the Graduate School at Utah State University the following semester where she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Advertising Design in June, 1980. That same month, Karen began working at the Weller Institute for the Cure of Design in Los Angeles, California. Her design career included work for Saul Bass/Herb Yager Inc. on Girl Scout Cookie packaging and AT&T Identity and package design; Advertising Designers on various brand identity and corporate collateral design and promotions; and as principle of her own design firm, Karen Lee & Associates, also providing corporate collateral, brand identity systems, and package design projects. She has taught graphic design and creative problem-solving at Arizona State University (1981-1982), Utah State University (1987-1988), and Boise State University (1989-1990). Upon returning to Texas in 1990, Karen re-established her advertising design practice which eventually transitioned into an exclusive relationship with Schlotzsky's Inc., in Austin Texas. By 1994, she was Creative Director at Schlotzsky's, where she stayed in various capacities

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